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THE CHIEF BRITISH DRAMATISTS

THE
CHIEF BRITISH DRAMATISTS

EXCLUDING SHAKESPEARE

TWENTY-FIVE PLAYS FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY TO THE END OF THE NINETEENTH

Edited by

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WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON

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PREFACE

This volume contains a severely sifted selection of plays, tragic and comic, written by British dramatists and acted on the stage with prolonged success. For obvious reasons it does not contain any of the histories, comedies, and tragedies of Shakespeare, who is too various to be represented by any single example of his work. For reasons perhaps less obvious, it does not include any specimens of the so-called "drama for the closet," the play not adjusted to the conditions of the contemporary stage. Accordingly it omits the imitations of Greek tragedy by Milton and Matthew Arnold, and also the poems in dialogue of Scott, Coleridge, and Byron, Shelley, and Swinburne, no one of which exerted any influence on the development of the drama in England. And for similar reasons it excludes the plays written by poets (like Browning and Tennyson) who, because they did not care to acquire the art of the theater, failed of the success that they desired in the playhouse. The endeavor of the editors has been to present the work of the professional playwrights who were able to establish themselves in the theater and whose plays "kept the stage" for years.

There are many professional playwrights of whose work we should have been glad to present examples, if only we had been allowed two or three volumes instead of one; and we must plead this necessary limitation as our sole excuse for the omission of Lyly, Peele, Greene, Chapman, Dekker, Marston, Middleton, Shirley, and Ford (all of whom the student will find in President Neilson's companion volume, devoted to the chief Elizabethan dramatists). In like manner we have been forced to exclude, Etherege, Steele, Shadwell, Addison, and Rowe; Cibber, Fielding, Gay, Lillo, Home, Garrick, the Colmans, O'Keefe, Holcroft, and Cumberland; Sheridan Knowles, Douglas Jerrold, Charles Reade, H. J. Byron, and Tom Taylor.

Yet in spite of these unavoidable exclusions (by no one more regretted than by us) we make bold to believe that we have here brought together a score or more of plays which illustrate adequately and even brilliantly the development of the dramatic literature of our language from the Middle Ages to the end of the nineteenth century. These pieces, strikingly unequal as they may be in merit — in invention and in construction, in characterization and in dialogue — are sufficient to reveal the evolution of the art of playmaking in Great Britain. If they are studied curiously they will serve to disclose the triple influence always exerted upon the dramatist by the theater of his own time and country, by the actors contemporary with him, and by the audiences whose approval he has to win. It is as interesting as it is instructive to observe how the changes in the size and shape of the playhouse, the varying personality of the players, and the shifting of the opinions and prejudices of the playgoers, have brought about a succession of modifications in the methods of the playmakers.

While this book has been made for the general reader and student, not for the expert, great care has been taken in the selection and preparation of the texts. For *Abraham and Isaac, The Second Shepherds' Play,* and *Ralph Roister Doister,* the modernized versions by Professor C. G. Child have been used, collated with Arber and with Manly; and for Kyd, Marlowe, Jonson, Heywood, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, and Massinger, the excellent texts prepared by President William Allan Neilson. In all cases a few obvious errors and misprints have been silently corrected. The poor state of most Restoration texts impelled the editors to make new texts of these plays for this occasion. The text of Dryden's *All for Love* is based on the first quarto of 1678, compared, after it was completed, with Noyes' carefully made edition of Dryden's plays; the text of *The Plain Dealer* is from the first quarto of 1677; that of *Venice Preserved,* from the first quarto of 1682; that of *The Provoked Wife,* from the first quarto of 1697, collated with the second and third quartos; that of *The Way of the World,* from the first quarto of 1700, and not the poorer first collected edition of 1711, which has unfortunately been made the basis of nearly all later editions of this play; and that of *The Beaux' Stratagem,* from the first quarto of 1707. This collection of Restoration plays, the editors feel confident in saying, is the most accurate, textually, that has so far been made. Spelling and punctuation have been modernized only so far as was necessary.

She Stoops to Conquer is based on the fifth edition of 1773, the last published in Goldsmith's lifetime and the best; it has been compared with Dickinson's and the Baker-Dobson text; *The School for Scandal,* except for a few minor changes, is Webster's admirable text in the Riverside College Classics; *Richelieu* is taken from *The Poetical and Dramatic Works of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Bart.,* 5 vols., London, 1854; *London Assurance* is reprinted, probably for the first time correctly, from the first London edition, 1841, which Boucicault himself edited with an introduction; *Caste,* with a few emendations in the stage directions, is reprinted from *The Principal Dramatic Works of Thomas William Robertson,* 2 vols., London, 1889; and *Pygmalion and Galatea,* from W. S. Gilbert, *Original Plays,* London, 1876.

The editors are greatly indebted to and hereby thank Professor C. G. Child and Houghton Mifflin Company for permission to use the texts of *Abraham and Isaac, The Second Shepherds' Play*, and *Ralph Roister Doister;* President William Allan Neilson and Houghton Mifflin Company for permission to reprint the plays by Kyd, Marlowe, Jonson, Heywood, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger; Hanson Hart Webster and Houghton Mifflin Company for permission to use their text of *The School for Scandal;* Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, William Heinemann, Ltd., and Walter H. Baker Company, for permission to reprint *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray;* Henry Arthur Jones, Esq., and Samuel French for permission to reprint *The Liars*.

The thanks of the editors are also due to Professor F. W. C. Lieder of Harvard University for his kindly assistance in the reading of the proof-sheets.

B. M.
P. R. L.

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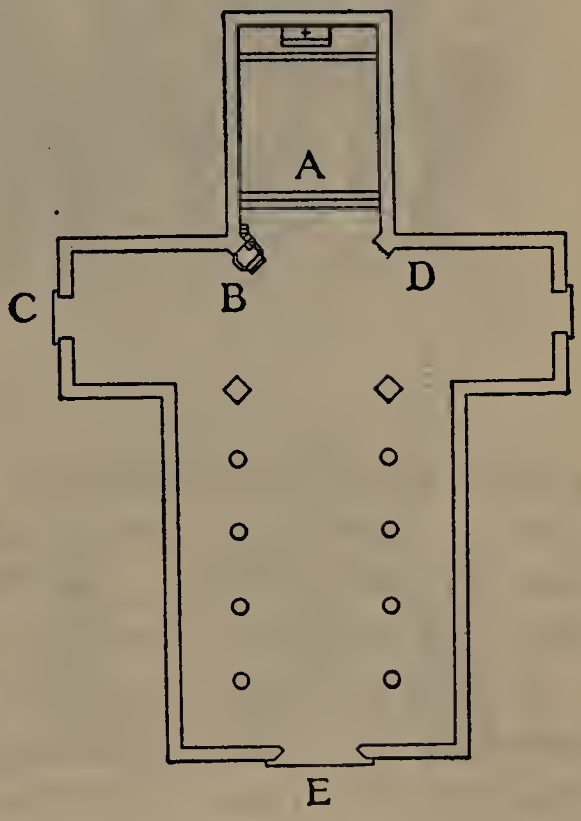
THE THEATER IN ENGLAND

The drama of our language had its remote origin in the ritual of the Church. In the Middle Ages the service was in Latin, which few could understand. To make plain to the ignorant the more significant episodes of the Gospel story, narrative was put into dialogue (chanted in Latin), the several characters being represented by priests. As this individualizing achieved its purpose of arousing interest and exciting curiosity, it became more elaborate. At Christmas the Shepherds would hear the glad tidings from the Herald Angel, and would be directed to the manger where the infant Jesus lay. In the course of time the visit of the Three Kings would also be shown in action; and then Herod would receive the unwelcome news that the King of Kings had been born, and would give orders for the slaying of the children. A similar sequence was evolved to embellish the Easter service when the three Marys would meet a priest robed in white as an Angel guarding the tomb and would be asked "Whom do Ye seek?"

Sooner or later the Christmas cycle and the Easter cycle were connected by representations in action of the intervening events in the life of Jesus; and thus the Passion-Play had its birth. A little later again selected episodes from the Old Testament were dramatized and prefixed to the dramatization of the Gospels; and thus the Mystery-Play appeared full grown.

Those who took part in the performance of a Mystery-Play were all connected with the Church; and the performance was in the church itself, the different episodes being acted in different parts of the edifice, each in that which was most convenient for the purpose, with no effort to indicate the real spot where the action was supposed to take place. The Shepherds entered at one door



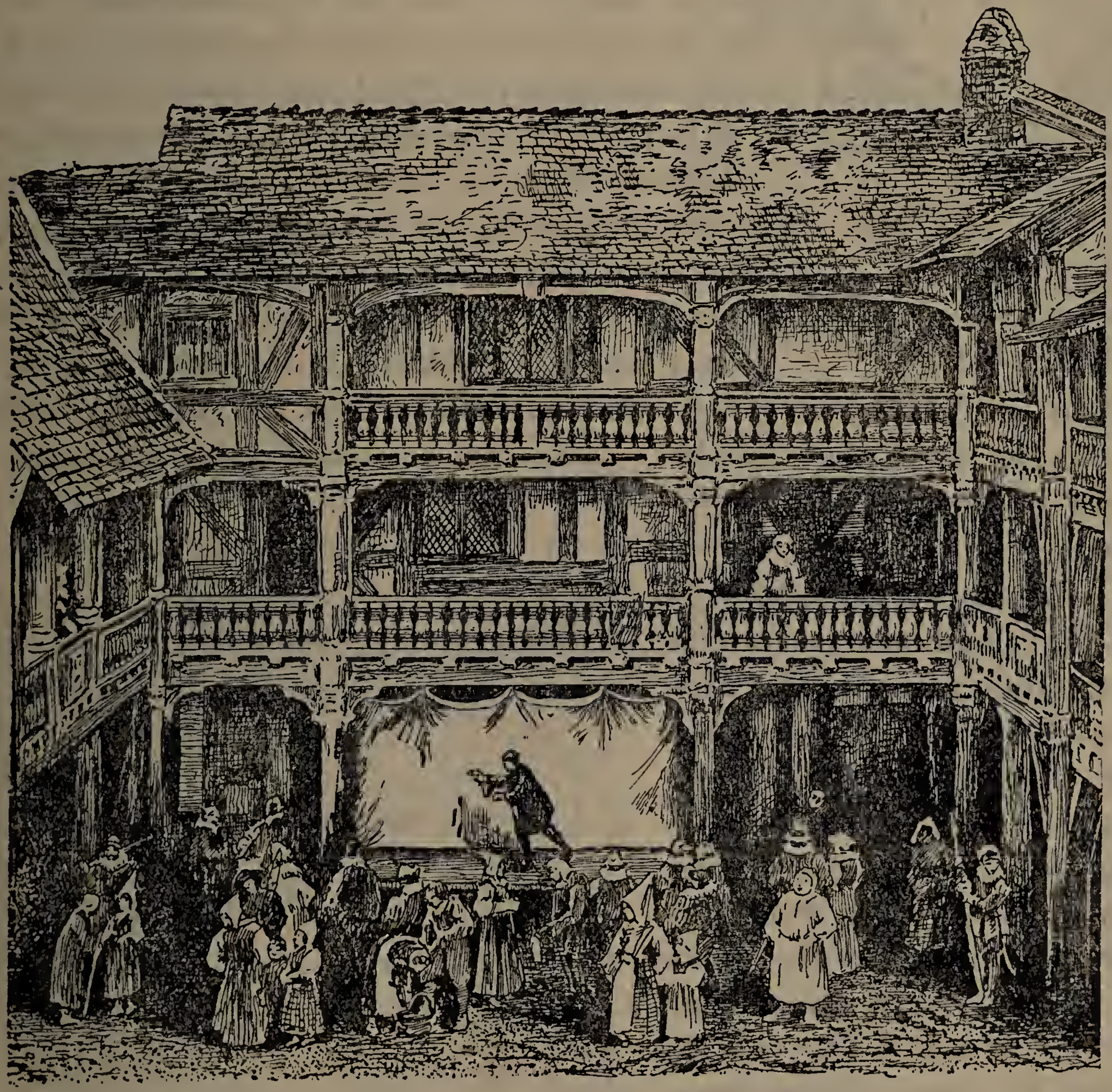
PLAN OF A MEDIÆVAL CHURCH, WITH STATIONS INDICATED

A. The Manger. B. Pulpit for the Herald Angel. C. Door at which Shepherds enter. D. Throne for Herod. E. Door at which the three Kings enter and advanced, singing, to the chancel, where the Manger sheltered the Holy Child; the Herald Angel was in the pulpit or the gallery; the Three Kings entered by the eastern door and passed in front of Herod, seated on his throne. The Massacre of the Innocents probably occurred in one of the chapels. These several convenient spots are called *Sedes* in Latin; the English word describing them was *Stations;* the French word was *Mansions*. There was, of course, nothing like scenery; and at first the costumes were probably symbolic, the Shepherds having sheepskins over their shoulders, and the Kings wearing crowns.

NOAH'S ARK

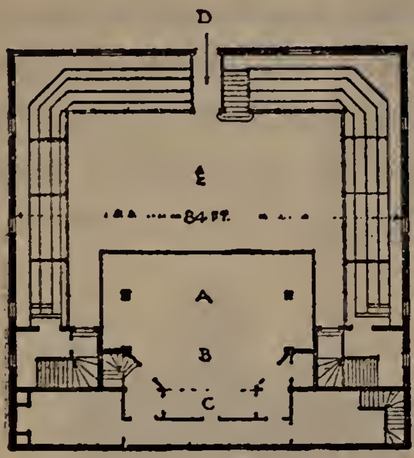
At last, when the increasing number of the episodes had forced the Mystery-Play out of the church, first to the porch, then to the churchyard, and finally to the square before the church or some other convenient place, the Church, both in France and in England, relinquished the control of the Mystery-Play to laymen — in France to specially organized associations (the Brotherhoods of the Passion), and in England to the Guilds or trade-unions, each Guild taking the most congenial episode (the shipwrights "Noah's Flood," for example, and the goldsmiths the Three Kings). In France the several mansions were set in order at the back of a long, shallow platform, the elevated throne for God being at the left of the spectators, and Hell-Mouth being at their right. In England the stations were often put on carts

— floats, as we should call them, pageant-wagons as they were then termed. These pageants were drawn from place to place, one following another, from early dawn till twilight. The action was on the wagon when the story demanded to be localized; but it was often also on the ground, one direction prescribing "Here Herod shall rage on the pageant and in the street"; and on occasion two wagons might be required, the actors going from one to the other. Thus it was that the performers were surrounded on all four sides by the spectators, just as they had been in the church.



INN YARD

When the Mystery-Play passed into the hands of unlearned laymen, English took the place of Latin; and this was accompanied by a bolder characterization and by a more abundant use of humor. Herod reveled in paroxysms of violent rage, and Noah's wife was portrayed as a waspish shrew. Sometimes the comic scenes were introduced on inappropriate occasions, a robustly farcical sheep-stealing adventure being shown just before the Shepherds heard the glad tidings.

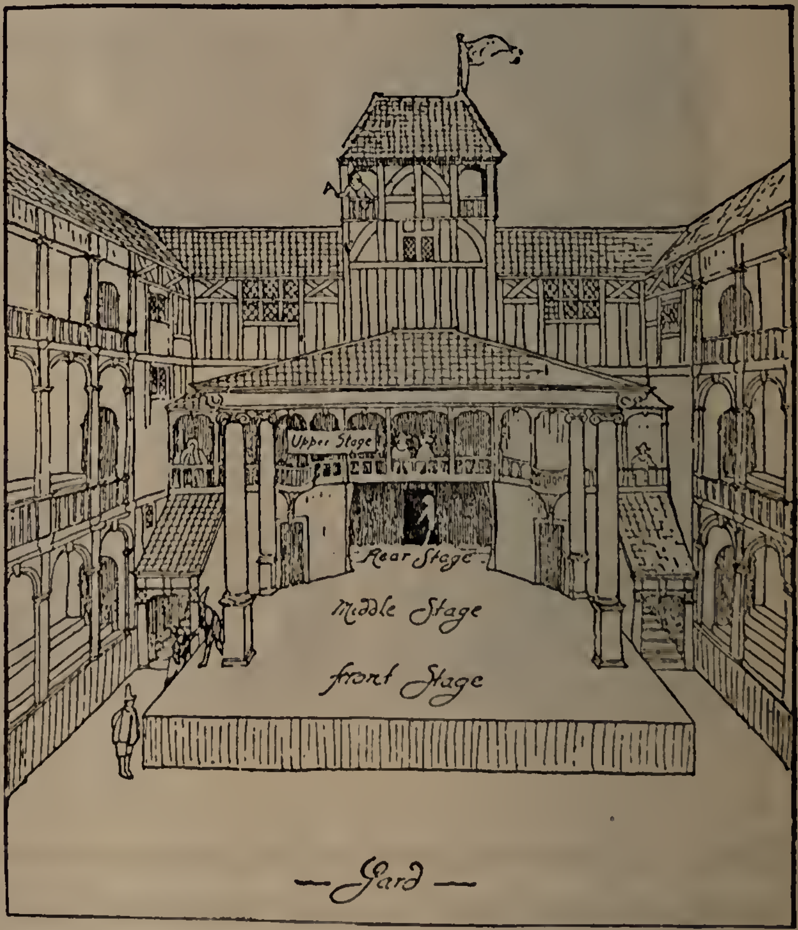


PLAN OF THE FORTUNE THEATER, LONDON

A, front stage; B, back stage; C, inner stage; D, entrance; E, courtyard

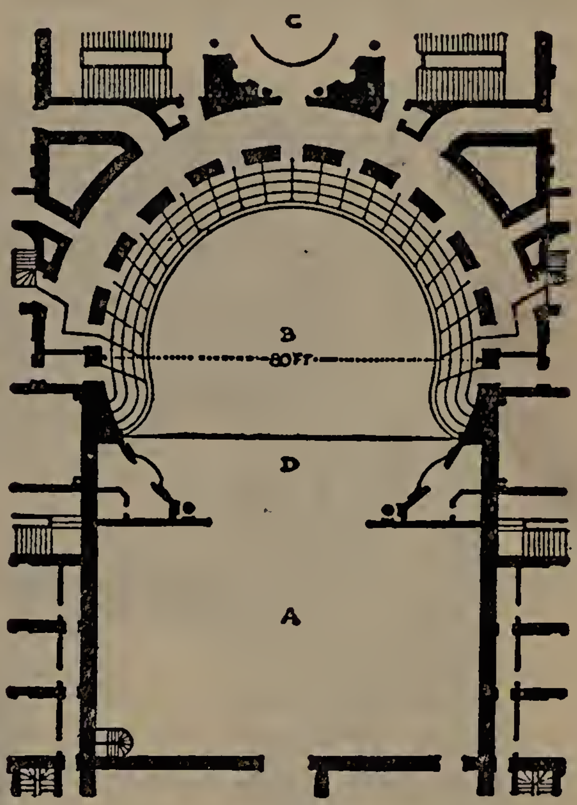
Thus the Bible-story was put into dialogue and action as a means of edification, and at first with no other intent. But the Mystery-Play soon served as a model for dramatizations of the Lives of the Saints (which we now call Miracle-Plays), and for the dramatizations of the allegories in which the mediæval mind delighted (which we now term Moralities). The Morality-Play led to a still wider departure from the original purpose, because it is almost impossible to present a personification of Avarice which is not more or less a portrait of a miser. So it came about that the religious drama slowly became secularized; and after a while the method of the Mystery-Play was sometimes used to show in dialogue and action the exploits of the heroes of history and of romance.

The Mystery-Plays and Miracle-Plays had been performed by amateur actors. The Morality-Plays, especially when they were mixed with farce, proved to be attractive to little groups of amateur actors who soon developed into semi-professionals, and who went about the country ready to present any one of half a dozen little pieces, Moralities, Folk-Plays, and even Chronicle-Plays. (Such a group was the small company which we find at Elsinore ready to do Hamlet's bidding.) They strolled through England, protected by the patronage of some nobleman, performing in the open fields, in the town hall, in the manor house,



INTERIOR OF THE FORTUNE THEATER, LONDON (1599)

From the restoration by Walter H. Godfrey, Esq., after the builder's contract and in the courtyards of inns. In the time of the Tudors, the English inn was likely to be a hollow square with galleries from which the wealthier spectators could look down, and with courtyards in which the poorer spectators could stand, surrounding on three sides the actors on their extemporized platform jutting from under the rear gallery. As London was the most populous city, certain of its inns were in constant use by one or another company of strollers, to the scandal of the city authorities, who strove to expel them. This compelled the actors (who had now become professionals) to build theaters of their own in the suburbs, outside the city limits.

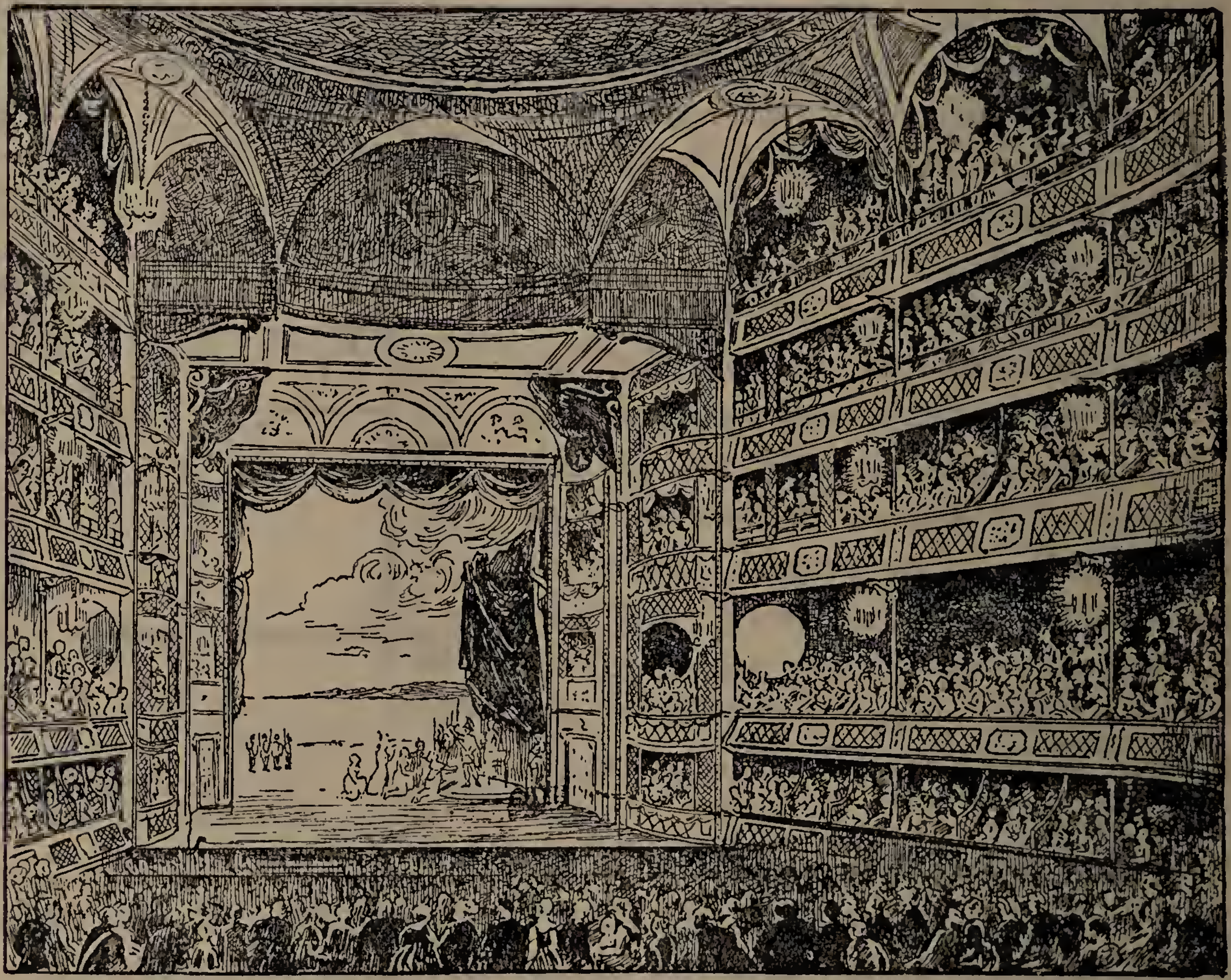


PLAN OF THE DRURY LANE THEATER, LONDON
A, back stage; D, front stage, or apron; B, auditorium; C, entry

The first theater may be described as the courtyard of an inn, without the inn. A platform thrust out into the yard served as a stage; and arras pendent from the gallery above could conceal or disclose what we now call the inner stage. The ruder spectators stood in the unroofed yard; and the gallants, on three-legged stools, sat on the sides of the stage itself. Thus the actor was surrounded on three sides by the audience.

The action was in the open space on the stage — a neutral ground which might be anywhere. If the audience needed to be told at any moment where the action was supposed to be taking place, that was revealed by the dialogue. There could be no front curtain and there was no scenery; but there were abundant properties — thrones, well-heads, pulpits, and so forth. To amuse the eye and the ear of the mob, restless on their feet, there were processions, parades, battles, the tolling of bells, the blaring of trumpets, the roll of thunder. Toward the end of the Tudor period the influence of the Court masques led to an elaboration of scenic devices, but without leading to the introduction of actual scenery. In the Elizabethan plays, even in Shakspere's Histories, there were many survivals of mediæval methods; for example, the putting of the tents of Richard and Richmond simultaneously on the stage was a retention of the tradition of the stations. As the whole Bible-story had been shown in action regardless of the lack of dramatic quality in certain episodes, so the Histories dramatized the chronicles with only an occasional omission of the less interesting facts in the hero's career.

After the Puritan revolt the theaters were closed, the companies were dispersed, and the tradition was interrupted. With the Restoration there came a new type of playhouse, roofed, lighted by candles and lamps, with most of the spectators seated. It had a spacious stage with a proscenium arch in which the curtain rose and fell; but the stage was a platform projecting boldly into the pit, and it was on this Apron, as it was called, that all the acting took place, the performers coming forward away from the scenery. They had to advance to the Apron, because that was the only part of the stage which could be so lighted as to allow the faces of the actors to be seen. And again, the performer was surrounded on three sides by the audience, which helped to increase the tendency toward eloquence, loud-sounding rhetoric, and sheer bombast — a tendency which had been inherited from the Elizabethans. As most of the later theaters were large, and as the stage was

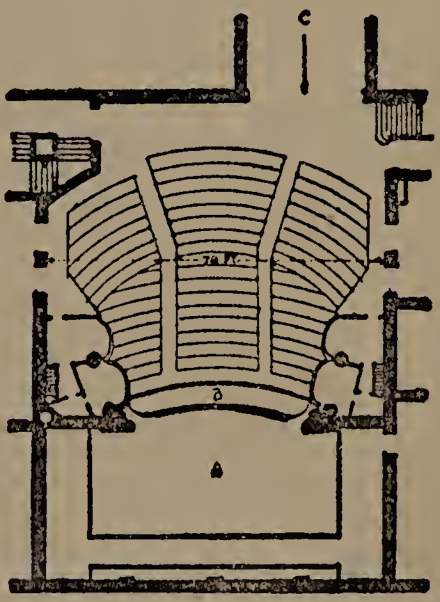


INTERIOR OF DRURY LANE THEATER, LONDON (1808)
For the earlier house on the same site, Sheridan wrote the "School for Scandal"

spacious, there came in time to be an elaboration of spectacular effect and of scenic device. The stage was equipped with grooves on each side to keep the wings erect and to allow flats to be run on to represent a wood or a street or a room. If it represented a room, there were no doors in the scenery and no side-walls, the performers simply walking on the stage through any convenient entrance between the parallel wings or through the doors on each side of the proscenium.

This type of theater was the home of the English drama for a century and a half. Scenery was more or less appropriate, and changes of place could be swiftly indicated by the sliding across of the flats which met in the center. The action was no longer on a neutral ground — it was localized by the scenery; and the scenery could be changed as many times as need be in the course of a single act.

The theatrical conditions to which Congreve had to conform were almost the same as those utilized by Sheridan a hundred years later, and by Bulwer-Lytton fifty years later still. It was only after the abolition of the monopoly of the two patent theaters (Drury Lane and Covent Garden), toward the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, that smaller theaters came into existence, diminishing the demand for eloquence, and giving a greater sense of intimacy. Gas had been introduced toward the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century; and electric light followed at the beginning of the last quarter. The Apron being no longer necessary, it was abolished, the curtain rising and falling in the proscenium arch, which became a picture frame. As the platform-stage of the Elizabethans had been succeeded by the apron-stage of the Restoration, so the apron-stage was succeeded by the picture-frame-stage, which is the one most familiar to us in the twentieth century.



PLAN OF THE EMPIRE THEATER, NEW YORK

A, stage; B, orchester; C, entrance; D, auditorium

It is probable that we have not yet seen in the past half-century the full effect of the development of the picture-frame-stage out of the platform-stage, accompanied as it was by increasing accuracy in the reproduction of actual interiors and by an increasing attention to pictorial effect. The box-set — the room with walls and ceiling — was introduced about the middle of the nineteenth century. The scenery for every play is now painted especially for that play and intended to supply a characteristic background; the actors are admonished to approach, as far as may be, to the speech of everyday life, to eschew vehemence of utterance and violence of gesture, and, as the saying is, to "keep in the picture."

It is partly as a result of these theatrical modifications, and partly owing to the influence of the realistic movement in literature, that the plays of our time differ in tone, in method, and in construction, from the plays of the preceding periods. For the first time in the history of the English drama, the performers are not more or less surrounded by the audience; they are separated by the proscenium arch and by the lower border of the picture frame. As the improvement in methods of illumination has made it possible to light all parts of the stage, even the remotest, there is no longer any necessity for the actors to come close to the spectators, and the diminished size of the theaters makes it possible to hear the voice, to see the gestures, and even to observe the expressions on the faces of the actors, whatever may be their position on the stage. It is to these conditions, and many others unknown to his predecessors, that the dramatist of to-day has to adjust his plays.

CHIEF BRITISH DRAMATISTS

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THE BROME ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

THE BROME ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

[Abraham *and* Isaac *enter.*]

Abraham. Father of Heaven, omnipotent,
With all my heart to thee I call,
Thou hast given me both land and rent,
And my livelihood thou hast to me sent,
I thank thee greatly evermore for all.

First of the earth thou madest Adam,
And Eve also to be his wife;
All other creatures from these two came:
And now thou has granted me, Abraham,
Here in this land to lead my life.

In mine age thou hast granted me this
That with me should dwell this young child dear.
I love nothing so much, ywis,
Except thine own self, dear Father of Bliss,
As my own sweet son, my Isaac here.

I have divers children more, I know,
But I love them not half so well as he.
This fair sweet child he doth cherish me so,
In every place wherever I go,
That no affliction may trouble me.

And therefore, Father of Heaven, I thee pray
For his health and also for his grace.
Now, Lord, keep him both night and day
That never affliction nor terror may
Come to my child in any place.

Now come on, Isaac, my own sweet child,
Go we home and take our rest.
Isaac. Abraham, mine own father so mild,
To follow you I am readiest
Late and early, God wot!
Abraham. Come on, sweet child, I love thee best
Of all the children that ever I begot.

[Abraham *and* Isaac *go.* God *speaks:*]

Deus. Mine angel, fast hie thee on thy way,
And unto mid-earth anon do thou go —
Abraham's heart now will I essay,
Whether he be stedfast or no.

Say I commanded him for to take
His young son Isaac, he loveth so,
And with his blood that he sacrifice make
If my friendship he would have and know.

Show him the way unto the hill
Where that his sacrifice shall be.
I shall essay now his good will,
Whether he loveth better his child or me.
All men shall take example by him
My commandments how they shall keep.

[The Angel *goes to find* Abraham. Abraham *speaks:*]

Abraham. Now, Father of Heaven, that didst form everything,
My prayers I make to thee again,
For this day my tender offering
Here must I give to thee amain.

Ah, Lord God, Almighty King,
What kind will be to thee most fain?
If I had thereof true knowing,
It should be done with might and main
Full soon by me!
To do thy pleasure on a hill,
Verily, it is my will,
Dear Father, God in Trinity!

[The Angel *appears to* Abraham.]

The Angel. Abraham, Abraham, be at rest!
Our Lord commandeth thee to take
Isaac, thy young son, that thou lovest best
And with his blood that thou sacrifice make.

Into the Land of Vision do thou go,
And offer thy child unto thy Lord;
I shall thee lead and show also.
To God's bidding, Abraham, give accord,

And follow me upon this green!
Abraham. Welcome to me be my Lord's command!
And his behest I will not withstand —
Yet Isaac, my young son in land,
A full dear child to me hath been!

Were God so pleased, I were liefer rid
Of all the good that I have, he gave,
Than that Isaac, my son, were discomforted,
So God in heaven my soul may save!

No thing on earth so much love I bore,
And now I must the child go kill!
Ah, Lord God, my conscience is troubled sore,
And yet, my dear Lord, I dread me the more
To begrudge anything against thy will.

I love my child as my life,
But yet I love my God much more thereto,
For though my heart should make any strife,
Yet will I not spare for child or wife,
But do as my Lord hath bid me do!

Though I love my son never so great a deal,
Yet smite off his head soon I shall.
Ah, Father of Heaven, to thee I kneel,
A hard death my son shall feel,
For to honor thee, Lord, withal!

The Angel. Abraham, Abraham, this is well said,
And all these decrees look thou obey!
But in thy heart be nothing dismayed.
Abraham. Nay, nay, forsooth! I hold me well paid
To please my God the best I may.

For though my heart be in heaviness set
The blood of my own dear son to see,
Yet will I not withhold my debt,
But Isaac, my son, I will go get,
And come as fast as ever may be.

[The Angel *departs.* Abraham *goes to fetch* Isaac:]

Abraham. Now, Isaac, my own son dear,
Where art thou, child! Speak to me.
Isaac. My fair sweet father, I am here,
And make my prayers to the Trinity.

Abraham. Rise up, my child, and fast come hither,
My gentle bairn that art so wise,
For we too, child, must go together,
And unto my Lord make sacrifice.

Isaac. I am full ready, my father. Lo!
Given to your hands, I stand right here,
And whatsoever ye bid me do, even so
It shall be done with glad cheer,
Full well and fine.
Abraham. Ah, Isaac, mine own son so dear,
God's blessing I give thee, and mine.

Hold this fagot upon thy back,
And I myself here fire shall bring.
Isaac. Father, all this here will I pack,
I am full fain to do your bidding.
Abraham. Ah, Lord of Heaven, my hands I wring,
This child's words wound like death my heart!

Now, Isaac, son, go we on our way
Unto yon mount with might and main.
Isaac. Let us go, my dear father, as fast as I may —
To follow you I am full fain,
Although I be slender.
Abraham. Ah, Lord, my heart breaketh in twain,
This child's words, they be so tender!

Ah, Isaac son, anon lay it there,
No longer upon thy back it hold,
For I must make ready prayer
To honor my Lord God as I was told.

Isaac. Lo, my dear father, where it is.
To cheer you, always I draw me near,

But, father, I marvel sore at this,
Why it is that ye make this heavy cheer,

And also, father, ever more fear I —
Where is your quick beast that ye should kill?
Both fire and wood we have ready by,
But quick beast have we none on this hill.

A quick beast, I wot well, slain must be,
Your sacrifice to make.
Abraham. Dread thee not, my child, I counsel thee
Our Lord will unto this place send me
Some manner of beast to take
By his sweet command.
Isaac. Yea, father, but my heart beginneth to quake
To see that sharp sword in your hand.

Whý bear ye your sword drawn so?
Of your countenance I have much wonder!
Abraham. Ah, Father of Heaven, so great is my woe,
This child here breaks my heart in sunder.

Isaac. Tell me, my dear father, ere that ye cease —
Bear ye your sword thus drawn for me?
Abraham. Ah, Isaac, sweet son, peace, peace!
For in sooth thou breakest my heart in three!

Isaac. Now truly, father, on somewhat ye think,
That ye mourn thus more and more.
Abraham. Ah, Lord of Heaven, let thy grace down sink,
For my heart was never half so sore!

Isaac. I pray you, father, let me know the truth,
Whether I shall have any harm or no.
Abraham. Not yet may I tell thee, sweet son, in sooth,
My heart is now so full of woe.

Isaac. Dear father, I pray you, hide it not from me,
But some of your thought, tell ye me, your son.
Abraham. Ah, Isaac, Isaac, I must kill thee!
Isaac. Kill me, father? Alas, what have I done!

If in aught I have trespassed against you, God wot,
With a rod ye may make me full mild —
And with your sharp sword kill me not,
For in truth, father, I am but a child.

Abraham. I am full sorry, son, thy blood to spill,
But truly, my child, it is not as I please.
Isaac. Now I woúld to God my móther were here on this hill!
She would kneel for me on both her knees
To save my life.
And since that my mother is not here,
Change your look, I pray you, father dear,
And kill me not with your knife.

Abraham. Forsooth, my son, save I thee kill,
I should grieve God right sore, I fear,
It is his commandment and also his will
That I should do this same deed here.

He commanded me, son, for certain
To make my sacrifice with thy blood.
Isaac. And is it God's will that I should be slain?
Abraham. Yea, truly, Isaac, my son so good,
And therefore my hands I wring!

Isaac. Now, father, against my Lord's decree,
I will never murmur, loud or still.
He might have sent me a better destiny,
If it had been his will.

Abraham. Forsooth, son, save this deed I did,
In grievous displeasure our Lord would be.

Isaac. Nay, nay, father, God forbid
That ever ye should grieve him for me!

Ye have other children, one or two,
Which ye should love well in natural kind.
I pray you, father, no more your grief renew,
For, if I am once dead and gone from you,
I shall soon be out of your mind.

Therefore do our Lord's bidding,
And when I am dead, then pray for me.
But, good father, tell ye my mother nothing,
Say that I am in another country dwelling.
Abraham. Ah, Isaac, Isaac, blessed mayest thou be!

My heart in anguish beginneth to rise
To see the blood of thy blessed body!
Isaac. Father, since it may be no other wise,
Let it pass over, as well as I.

But, father, ere I go unto my death,
I pray you bless me with your hand.
Abraham. Now, Isaac, with all my breath,
My blessing I give thee upon this land,
And, verily, God's thereto with this.
Isaac, Isaac, son, rise up and stand,
Thy fair sweet mouth that I may kiss.

Isaac. Now farewell, my own father so fine,
And greet well my mother as may accord,
But I pray you, father, to hide mine eyne
That I see not the stroke of your sharp sword
That my flesh shall defile.
Abraham. Son, thy words make me to weep full sore —
Now, my dear son Isaac, speak no more.
Isaac. Ah, my own dear father, wherefore?
We shall speak here together so little while.

And since that I must needs be dead,
Yet, my dear father, to you I pray,
Smite but few strokes at my head
And make an end as soon as ye may,
And tarry not too long.
Abraham. Child, thy meek words do me dismay,
So welaway must be my song!

Except alone that I do God's will.
Ah, Isaac, my own sweet child,
Kiss me yet again upon this hill —
In all the world is none so mild!

Isaac. Now, truly, father, all this tarrying,
It doeth my heart but harm;
I pray you, father, make an ending.
Abraham. Come up, sweet child, into my arm.

I must bind thy hands two,
Although thou be never so mild.
Isaac. Ah, mercy, father! Why should ye so do?
Abraham. That thou should'st not resist, my child.

Isaac. Nay, indeed, father, I'll not try to let you.
Do on, for all me, your will,
And the purpose to which ye have set you,
For God's love, hold it steadfast still.

I am full sorry this day to die,
But yet I wish not my God to grieve.
Do your pleasure for all me full boldly,
My fair sweet father, I give you leave.

But, father, I pray you evermore,
Nothing unto my mother tell,
If she knew it, she would weep full sore,
For she loveth me, father, in truth, full well —
May God's blessing with her be!
Now farewell, my mother so sweet,
We two are like no more to meet,
Abraham. Ah, Isaac, Isaac, son, thou dost make me greet,
And with thy words thou doth anguish me!

Isaac. I am sorry, sweet father, to grieve you truly;
I cry you mercy for what I have done;
And for all trespass I did you unduly,

Forgive me, dear father, all I have done
God of Heaven be with me!

Abraham. Ah, dear child, forbear to moan!
In all thy life, thou didst grieve me none.
Now blessed be thou, body and bone,
That ever thou wert bred and born.
Thou hast been to me a child full good.
But in truth, child, though I mourn,
Never so fast,
Yet must I needs here at the last
In this place shed all thy blood.

Therefore, my dear son, here shalt thou lie.
Unto my work I must proceed.
In truth, I as lief were myself should die —
If God would be pleased with my deed —
And mine own body for to offer!
Isaac. Ah, mercy, father! mourn ye no more.
Your weeping maketh mine heart as sore
As mine own death I am to suffer.

Your kerchief, father, about mine eyes wind.
Abraham. So I shall, sweetest child on earth so broad.
Isaac. Now still, good father, have this in mind,
And smite me not often with your sharp sword,
But hastily that it be sped.

(*Here* Abraham *laid a cloth on* Isaac's *face, thus saying:*)

Abraham. Now farewell, my child so full of grace!
Isaac. Ah, father, father, turn downward my face!
For of your sharp sword I am ever adread.

Abraham. To do this deed I am full sorry,
But, Lord, thy behest I will not withstand.
Isaac. Ah, Father of Heaven, to thee I cry.
Lord, receive me into thy hand!

Abraham. Lo, now is the time come for sure
That my sword into his neck shall bite.
Ah, Lord, my heart may not this endure,
I may not find it in my heart to smite!
My heart is not equal thereunto!
Yet fain would I work my Lord's will,
But this young innocent lieth so still,
I may not find it in my heart him to kill —
O Father of Heaven, what shall I do!

Isaac. Ah, mercy, father, why tarry ye so,
And let me so long on this heath thus lie?
Now I would God the stroke were no more to know.
Father, heartily I pray you, shorten my woe,
And let me not wait thus, looking to die.

Abraham. Now, heart, why would'st thou not break in thee?
Yet shált thou not máke me to my Gód unmild.
I will no longer hold back for thee,
Because that my God would offended be.
Now receive the stroke, my own dear child.

(*Here* Abraham *drew his stroke, and* The Angel *took the sword in his hand suddenly.*)

The Angel. I am an angel, thou mayest quickly soon see,
That from heaven to thee is sent.
Our Lord a hundred times thanketh thee
For the keeping of his commandment.
He knoweth thy will and also thine heart,
That thou fearest him above everything,
And to ease of thy heaviness a part,
A fair ram yonder I did bring.

Lo, among the briars he standeth tied.
Now, Abraham, amend thy mood,
For Isaac, thy young son, here by thy side,
This day shall not shed his blood.
Go, make thy sacrifice with yon ram.
Now farewell, blessed Abraham,
For unto heaven I go now home:
The way is full straight.
Take up thy son so free!
[The Angel *goes.*]

Abraham. Ah, Lord, I thank thee for thy great grace,
Now am I eased in divers wise.

Arise up, Isaac, my dear son, arise,
Arise up, sweet child, and come to me!

Isaac. Ah, mercy, father, why do ye not smite?
Ah, smite on, father, once with your knife!
Abraham. Peace, my sweet son, let your heart be light,
For our Lord of Heaven hath granted thy life
By his angel now,
That thou shalt not die this day, son, truly.
Isaac. Ah, father, full glad then were I,
Iwis, father, I say, iwis,
If this tale were true!
Abraham. A hundred times, my son fair of hue,
For joy thy mouth now will I kiss.

Isaac. Ah, my dear father Abraham,
Will not God be wroth that we do thus?
Abraham. No, no, surely, my sweet son! for yon same ram
He hath sent hither down to us.

Yon beast shall die here in thy stead,
In honor of our Lord, alone!
Go fetch him hither, my child, indeed.
Isaac. Father, I will go catch him by the head,
And bring yon beast with me anon.

Ah, sheep, sheep, blessed may thou be!
That ever thou wert sent down hither!
Thou shalt this day die for me,
In worship of the Holy Trinity.
Now come fast and go we together,
To my father quick hie!
Though thou be never so gentle and good,
Yet I had liefer thou should'st shed thy blood
In sooth, sheep, than I!
Lo, father, I have brought here, full smart,
This gentle sheep, and him to you I give,
But, Lord God, I thank thee with all my heart,
For I am glad that I shall live,
And kiss again once my dear mother!
Abraham. Now be right merry, my sweet child,
For this quick beast that is so mild,
Here I shall offer before all other.

Isaac. And I will fast begin to blow,
This fire shall burn a full good speed,
But, father, if I stoop down low,
Ye will not kill me with your sword, I trow?
Abraham. No, to fear, sweet son, thou hast surely no need.
My mourning is past!
Isaac. Yea, but I would that sword were in a fire, indeed,
For, father, it maketh me full sore aghast!

(*Here* Abraham *made his offering, kneeling and saying thus:*)

Abraham. Now, Lord God of Heaven in Trinity,
Almighty God omnipotent,
My offering I make in worship of thee,
And with this quick beast I thee present.
Lord, receive thou my intent,
As thou art God and ground of our grace.

Deus. Abraham, Abraham, well mayest thou speed,
And Isaac, thy young son, thee by!
Truly, Abraham, for this deed,
I shall multiply of you both the seed,
As thick as stars be in the sky,
Both of greater and less,
And as thick as the sand is in the sea,
So thick multiplied your seed shall be,
This grant I you for your goodness.

Of you shall come increase great enow,
And ever be in bliss without end,
For me, as God alone, ye avow
In fear, and to my commandments bow,
My blessing I give wheresoever ye wend!

Abraham. Lo, of this work that we have wrought,
Isaac, my son, how think ye still?
Full glad and blithe may we be in thought
That we murmured not against God's will
On this fair heath here!
Isaac. Ah, father, I thank our Lord heartily,

That so well my wit hath served me,
The Lord God more than my death to fear.

Abraham. Why, dearworthy son, wert thou frighted so?
Full boldly, child, tell me thy lore.
Isaac. By my faith, yea, father, — if aught I know,
I was never so afraid before,
As I have been on yon hill!
But, by my faith, father, I swear
I will nevermore come there,
Except it be against my will!

Abraham. Yea, come on, my own sweet son, even so,
And homeward fast now let us go.
Isaac. By my faith, father, thereto I agree!
I had never such good will to go home,
And to speak with my dear mother!
Abraham. Ah, Lord of Heaven, I thank thee!
For now I may lead home with me
Isaac, my young son so free,
The gentlest child above all other,
This may I avow full heartily.

Now, go we forth, my blessed son.
Isaac. I assent, father, and let us go,
For, by my troth, once home, why then,
I would never go out like this again.
I pray God give us grace evermore anew,
And all those that we be beholden to!

[Abraham *and* Isaac *go.* *The* Doctor *enters.*]

Doctor. Lo, now, sovereigns and sirs, we have showed for example
This solemn story to great and small,
It is a good lesson for learned and simple,
And for the wisest of us all,
Without whipping, God wot!
For this story showeth you clear
How to our full power here,
We should keep God's commandments and murmur not.

Think ye, sirs, if God sent an angel,
And commanded you your child to slay,
By your truth, is there any of you
That would either repine or rebel straightway?
How think ye now, sirs? I think there be
Three or four or more hereby —
And these women that weep so sorrowfully
When that their children from them die
(As is law of kind).
It is but folly, ye well may trow,
Against God to murmur or grief to show,
For ye shall never see him mischiefed, well I know!
By land or water, bear this in mind!

And murmur not against our Lord God,
In wealth or woe, whatsoever he send,
Though low ye be bowed beneath his rod,
For when he so willeth, he may it amend,
If his commandments with true hearts ye keep without fail,
As this story may serve you to show and forewarn,
And him faithfully serve, while ye be sound and hale,
That ye may please God both even and morn.
Now Jesu, that wore the crown of thorn,
Bring us all to heaven's bliss!

FINIS

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

FROM THE TOWNELEY CYCLE

[*The* First Shepherd (Primus Pastor) *enters.*]

Primus Pastor. Lord, but this weather is cold, and I am ill wrapped!
Nigh dazed, were the truth told, so long have I napped;
My legs under me fold; my fingers are chapped —
With such like I don't hold, for I am all lapt
In sorrow.
In storms and tempest,
Now in the east, now in the west,
Woe is him has never rest
Midday nor morrow!

But we seely shepherds that walk on the moor,
In faith we're nigh at hand to be put out of door.
No wonder, as it doth stand, if we be poor,
For the tilth of our land lies fallow as the floor,
As ye ken.
We're so burdened and banned,
Over-taxed and unmanned,
We're made tame to the hand
Of these gentry men.

Thus they rob us of our rest, our Lady them harry!
These men bound to their lords' behest, they make the plough tarry,
What men say is for the best, we find the contrary, —
Thus are husbandmen oppressed, in point to miscarry,
In life,
Thus hold they us under
And from comfort sunder.
It were great wonder,
If ever we should thrive.
For if a man may get an embroidered sleeve or a brooch now-a-days,
Woe is him that may him grieve, or a word in answer says!
No blame may he receive, whatever pride he displays;
And yet may no man believe one word that he says,
Not a letter.
His daily needs are gained
By boasts and bragging feigned,
And in all he's maintained
By men that are greater.

Proud shall come a swain as a peacock may go,
He must borrow my wain, my plough also,
Then I am full fain to grant it ere he go.
Thus live we in pain, anger, and woe
By night and day!
He must have it, if he choose,
Though I should it lose,
I were better hanged than refuse,
Or once say him nay!

It does me good as I walk thus alone
Of this world for to talk and to make my moan.
To my sheep will I stalk, and hearken anon,
There wait on a balk, or sit on a stone.
Full soon,
For I trow, pardie,
True men if they be,
We shall have company,
Ere it be noon.

[*The* First Shepherd *goes out* (*or to one side*). *The* Second Shepherd *enters.*]

Secundus Pastor. Ben'cite and Dominus! What may this mean?
Why fares the world thus! The like often we've seen!

Lord, but it is spiteful and grievous, this weather so keen!
And the frost so hideous — it waters mine een!
That's no lie!
Now in dry, now in wet,
Now in snow, now in sleet,
When my shoes freeze to my feet,
It's not all easy!

But so far as I ken, wherever I go,
We seely wedded men suffer mickle woe,
We have sorrow once and again, it befalls oft so.
Seely Capel, our hen, both to and fro
She cackles,
But if she begins to croak,
To grumble or cluck,
Then woe be to our cock,
For he is in the shackles!

These men that are wed have not all their will;
When they're full hard bestead, they sigh mighty still;
God knows the life they are led is full hard and full ill,
Nor thereof in bower or bed may they speak their will,
This tide.
My share I have found,
Know my lesson all round,
Wo is him that is bound,
For he must it abide!

But now late in men's lives (such a marvel to me
That I think my heart rives such wonders to see,
How that destiny drives that it should so be!)
Some men will have two wives and some men three
In store.
Some are grieved that have any,
But I'll wager my penny
Woe is him that has many,
For he feels sore!

But young men as to wooing, for God's sake that you bought,
Beware well of wedding, and hold well in thought,
"Had I known" is a thing that serves you nought.
Much silent sorrowing has a wedding home brought,
And grief gives,
With many a sharp shower —
For thou mayest catch in an hour
What shall taste thee full sour
As long as one lives!

For — if ever read I epistle! — I have one by my fire,
As sharp as a thistle, as rough as a briar,
She has brows like a bristle and a sour face by her;
If she had once wet her whistle, she might sing clearer and higher
Her pater-noster;
She is as big as a whale,
She has a gallon of gall, —
By him that died for us all,
I wish I had run till I had lost her!

Primus Pastor. "God look over the row!" like a deaf man ye stand.
Secundus Pastor. Yea, sluggard, the devil thy maw burn with his brand!
Didst see aught of Daw?
Primus Pastor. Yea, on the pasture-land
I heard him blow just before; he comes nigh at hand
Below there.
Stand still.
Secundus Pastor. Why?
Primus Pastor. For he comes, hope I.
Secundus Pastor. He'll catch us both with some lie
Unless we beware.

[*The* Third Shepherd *enters, at first without seeing them.*]

Tertius Pastor. Christ's cross me speed and St. Nicholas!
Thereof in sooth I had need, it is worse than it was.
Whoso hath knowledge, take heed, and let the world pass,
You may never trust it, indeed, — it's as brittle as glass,
As it rangeth.

Never before fared this world so,
With marvels that greater grow,
Now in weal, now in woe,
And everything changeth.

There was never since Noah's flood such floods seen,
Winds and rains so rude and storms so keen;
Some stammered, some stood in doubt, as I ween. —
Now God turn all to good, I say as I mean!
For ponder
How these floods all drown
Both in fields and in town,
And bear all down,
And that is a wonder!

We that walk of nights our cattle to keep,
[*Catches sight of the others.*]
We see startling sights when other men sleep.
Yet my heart grows more light — I see shrews a-peep.
Ye are two tall wights — I will give my sheep
A turn, below.
But my mood is ill-sent;
As I walk on this bent,
I may lightly repent,
If I stub my toe.

Ah, Sir, God you save and my master sweet!
A drink I crave, and somewhat to eat.
Primus Pastor. Christ's curse, my knave, thou'rt a lazy cheat!
Secundus Pastor. Lo, the boy lists to rave! Wait till later for meat,
We have eat it.
Ill thrift on thy pate!
Though the rogue came late,
Yet is he in state
To eat, could he get it.

Tertius Pastor. That such servants as I, that sweat and swink,
Eat our bread full dry gives me reason to think.
Wet and weary we sigh while our masters wink,
Yet full late we come by our dinner and drink —
But soon thereto
Our dame and sire,
When we've run in the mire,
Take a nip from our hire,
And pay slow as they care to.

But hear my oath, master, since you find fault this way,
I shall do this hereafter — work to fit my pay;
I'll do just so much, sir, and now and then play,
For never yet supper in my stomach lay
In the fields.
But why dispute so?
Off with staff I can go.
"Easy bargain," men say,
"But a poor return yields."

Primus Pastor. Thou wert an ill lad for work to ride wooing
From a man that had but little for spending.
Secundus Pastor. Peace, boy, I bade! No more jangling,
Or I'll make thee full sad, by the Heaven's King,
With thy gauds!
Where are our sheep, boy? Left lorn?
Tertius Pastor. Sir, this same day at morn,
I them left in the corn
When they rang Lauds.

They have pasture good, they cannot go wrong.
Primus Pastor. That is right. By the Rood, these nights are long!
Ere we go now, I would someone gave us a song.
Secundus Pastor. So I thought as I stood, to beguile us along.
Tertius Pastor. I agree.
Primus Pastor. The tenor I'll try.
Secundus Pastor. And I the treble so high.
Tertius Pastor. Then the mean shall be I.
How ye chant now, let's see!
[*They sing (the song is not given).*]

(*Tunc entrat* MAK, *in clamide se super togam vestitus.*)

MAK. Now, Lord, by thy seven names' spell, that made both moon and stars on high,
Full more than I can tell, by thy will for me, Lord, lack I.
I am all at odds, nought goes well — that oft doth my temper try.
Now would God I might in heaven dwell, for there no children cry,
So still.
PRIMUS PASTOR. Who is that pipes so poor?
MAK. Would God ye knew what I endure!
[PRIMUS PASTOR.] Lo, a man that walks on the moor,
And has not all his will!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Mak, whither dost speed? What news do you bring?
TERTIUS PASTOR. Is he come? Then take heed each one to his thing.
(*Et accipit clamiden ab ipso.*)
MAK. What! I am a yeoman — since there's need I should tell you — of the King,
That self-same, indeed, messenger from a great lording,
And the like thereby.
Fie on you! Go hence
Out of my presence!
I must have reverence,
And you ask "who am I!"

PRIMUS PASTOR. Why dress ye it up so quaint? Mak, ye do ill!
SECUNDUS PASTOR. But, Mak, listen, ye saint, I believe what ye will!
TERTIUS PASTOR. I trow the knave can feint, by the neck the devil him kill!
MAK. I shall make complaint, and you'll all get your fill,
At a word from me —
And tell your doings, forsooth!
PRIMUS PASTOR. But, Mak, is that truth?
Now take out that southern tooth
And stick in a flea!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Mak, the devil be in your eye, verily! to a blow I'd fain treat you.
TERTIUS PASTOR. Mak, know you not me? By God, I could beat you!

MAK. God keep you all three! Me thought I had seen you — I greet you,
Ye are a fair company!
PRIMUS PASTOR. Oh, now you remember, you cheat, you!
SECUNDUS PASTOR. Shrew, jokes are cheap!
When thus late a man goes,
What will folk suppose? —
You've a bad name, God knows,
For stealing of sheep!

MAK. And true as steel am I, all men know and say,
But a sickness I feel, verily, that grips me hard, night and day.
My belly is all awry, it is out of play —
TERTIUS PASTOR. "Seldom doth the Devil lie dead by the way —"
MAK. Therefore
Full sore am I and ill,
Though I stand stone still;
I've not eat a needle
This month and more.

PRIMUS PASTOR. How fares thy wife, by my hood, how fares she, ask I?
MAK. Lies asprawl, by the Rood, lo, the fire close by,
And a house-full of home-brewed she drinks full nigh —
Ill may speed any good thing that she will try
Else to do! —
Eats as fast as may be,
And each year there'll a day be
She brings forth a baby,
And some years two.

But were I now kinder, d'ye hear, and far richer in purse,
Still were I eaten clear out of house and home, sirs.
And she's a foul-favored dear, see her close, by God's curse!

No one knows or may hear, I trow, of a worse,
Not any!
Now will ye see what I proffer? —
To give all in my coffer,
To-morrow next to offer
Her head-mass penny.

Secundus Pastor. Faith, so weary and worn is there none in this shire.
I must sleep, were I shorn of a part of my hire.
Tertius Pastor. I'm naked, cold, and forlorn, and would fain have a fire.
Primus Pastor. I'm clean spent, for, since morn, I've run in the mire.
Watch thou, do!
Secundus Pastor. Nay, I'll lie down hereby,
For I must sleep, truly.
Tertius Pastor. As good a man's son was I,
As any of you!
[*They prepare to lie down.*]

But, Mak, come lie here in between, if you please.
Mak. You'll be hindered, I fear, from talking at ease,
Indeed!
[*He yields and lies down.*]
From my top to my toe,
Manus tuas commendo,
Poncio Pilato,
Christ's cross me speed!

(*Tunc surgit, pastoribus dormientibus, et dicit:*)

Now 'twere time a man knew, that lacks what he'd fain hold,
To steal privily through then into a fold,
And then nimbly his work do — and be not too bold,
For his bargain he'd rue, if it were told
At the ending
Now 'twere time their wrath to tell! —
But he needs good counsel
That fain would fare well,
And has but little for spending.
But about you a circle as round as a moon,
[*He draws the circle.*]
Till I have done what I will, till that it be noon,
That ye lie stone still, until I have done;
And I shall say thereto still, a few good words soon
Of might:
Over your heads my hand I lift.
Out go your eyes! Blind be your sight!
But I must make still better shift,
If it's to be right.

Lord, how hard they sleep — that may ye all hear!
I never herded sheep, but I'll learn now, that's clear.
Though the flock be scared a heap, yet shall I slip near.
[*He captures a sheep.*]
Hey — hitherward creep! Now that betters our cheer
From sorrow.
A fat sheep, I dare say!
A good fleece, swear I may!
When I can, then I'll pay,
But this I will borrow!

[Mak *goes to his house, and knocks at the door.*]

Mak. Ho, Gill, art thou in? Get us a light!
Uxor Eius. Who makes such a din at this time of night?
I am set for to spin, I think not I might
Rise a penny to win! Curses loud on them light
Trouble cause!
A busy house-wife all day
To be called thus away!
No work's done, I say,
Because of such small chores!

Mak. The door open, good Gill. See'st thou not what I bring?
Uxor. Draw the latch, an thou will. Ah, come in, my sweeting!
Mak. Yea, thou need'st not care didst thou kill me with such long standing!
Uxor. By the naked neck still thou art likely to swing.

Mak. Oh, get away!
I am worthy of my meat,
For at a pinch I can get
More than they that swink and sweat
All the long day.

Thus it fell to my lot, Gill! Such luck came my way!
Uxor. It were a foul blot to be hanged for it some day.
Mak. I have often escaped, Gillot, as risky a play.
Uxor. But "though long goes the pot to the water," men say,
"At last
Comes it home broken."
Mak. Well know I the token,
But let it never be spoken —
But come and help fast!

I would he were slain, I would like well to eat,
This twelvemonth was I not so fain to have some sheep's meat.
Uxor. Should they come ere he's slain and hear the sheep bleat —
Mak. Then might I be ta'en. That were a cold sweat!
The door —
Go close it!
Uxor. Yes, Mak, —
For if they come at thy back —
Mak. Then might I suffer from the whole pack
The devil, and more!

Uxor. A good trick have I spied, since thou thinkest of none,
Here shall we him hide until they be gone —
In my cradle he'll bide — just you let me alone —
And I shall lie beside in childbed and groan.
Mak. Well said!
And I shall say that this night
A boy child saw the light.
Uxor. Now that day was bright
That saw me born and bred!

This is a good device and a far cast.
Ever a woman's advice gives help at the last!
I care not who spies! Now go thou back fast!
Mak. Save I come ere they rise, there'll blow a cold blast!
[Mak *goes back to the moor, and prepares to lie down.*]
I will go sleep.
Still sleeps all this company,
And I shall slip in privily
As it had never been I
That carried off their sheep.

Primus Pastor. *Resurrex a mortruis!*
Reach me a hand!
Judas carnas dominus! I can hardly stand!
My foot's asleep, by Jesus, and my mouth's dry as sand.
I thought we had laid us full nigh to England!
Secundus Pastor. Yea, verily!
Lord, but I have slept well.
As fresh as an eel,
As light do I feel,
As leaf on the tree.

Tertius Pastor. Ben'cite be herein!
So my body is quaking,
My heart is out of my skin with the to-do it's making.
Who's making all this din, so my head's set to aching.
To the doer I'll win! Hark, you fellows, be waking!
Four we were —
See ye aught of Mak now?
Primus Pastor. We were up ere thou.
Secundus Pastor. Man, to God I vow,
Not once did he stir.

Tertius Pastor. Methought he was lapt in a wolf's skin.
Primus Pastor. So many are wrapped now — namely within.
Tertius Pastor. When we had long napped, methought with a gin
A fat sheep he trapped, but he made no din.
Secundus Pastor. Be still!
Thy dream makes thee mad,
It's a nightmare you've had.

Primus Pastor. God bring good out of bad,
If it be his will!

Secundus Pastor. Rise, Mak, for shame! Right long dost thou lie.
Mak. Now Christ's Holy Name be with us for aye!
What's this, by Saint James, I can't move when I try.
I suppose I'm the same. Oo-o, my neck's lain awry
Enough, perdie —
Many thanks! — since yester even.
Now, by Saint Stephen,
I was plagued by a sweven,
Knocked the heart of me.

I thought Gill begun to croak and travail full sad,
Well-nigh at the first cock, with a young lad
To add to our flock. Of that I am never glad,
I have "tow on my rock more than ever I had."
Oh, my head!
A house full of young banes —
The devil knock out their brains!
Wo is him many gains,
And thereto little bread.

I must go home, by your leave, to Gill, as I thought.
Prithee look in my sleeve that I steal naught.
I am loath you to grieve, or from you take aught.
Tertius Pastor. Go forth — ill may'st thou thrive! [Mak *goes.*] Now I would that we sought
This morn,
That we had all our store.
Primus Pastor. But I will go before.
Let us meet.
Secundus Pastor. Where, Daw?
Tertius Pastor. At the crooked thorn.

[*They go out.* Mak *enters and knocks at his door.*]

Mak. Undo the door, see who's here! How long must I stand?
Uxor Eius. Who's making such gear?
Now "walk in the wenyand."
Mak. Ah, Gill, what cheer? It is I, Mak, your husband.
Uxor. Then may we "see here the devil in a band,"
Sir Guile!
Lo, he comes with a note
As he were held by the throat.
And I cannot devote
To my work any while.

Mak. Will ye hear the pother she makes to get her a gloze —
Naught but pleasure she takes, and curls up her toes.
Uxor. Why, who runs, who wakes, who comes, who goes,
Who brews, who bakes, what makes me hoarse, d'ye suppose!
And also,
It is ruth to behold,
Now in hot, now in cold,
Full woeful is the household
That no woman doth know!

But what end hast thou made with the shepherds, Mak?
Mak. The last word that they said when I turned my back
Was they'd see that they had of their sheep all the pack.
They'll not be pleased, I'm afraid, when they their sheep lack,
Perdie.
But how so the game go,
They'll suspect me, whether or no,
And raise a great bellow,
And cry out upon me.

But thou must use thy sleight.
Uxor. Yea, I think it not ill.
I shall swaddle him aright in my cradle with skill.
Were it yet a worse plight, yet a way I'd find still.
[Gill *meanwhile swaddles the sheep and places him in the cradle.*]
I will lie down forthright. Come tuck me up.
Mak. That I will.
Uxor. Behind!
[Mak *tucks her in at the back.*]

If Coll come and his marrow,
They will nip us full narrow.
Mak. But I may cry out "Haro,"
The sheep if they find.

Uxor. Hearken close till they call — they will come anon.
Come and make ready all, and sing thou alone —
Sing lullaby, thou shalt, for I must groan
And cry out by the wall on Mary and John
Full sore.
Sing lullaby on fast,
When thou hear'st them at last,
And, save I play a shrewd cast,
Trust me no more.

[The Shepherds enter on the moor and meet.]

Tertius Pastor. Ah, Coll, good morn! Why sleepest thou not?
Primus Pastor. Alas, that ever I was born! We have a foul blot.
A fat wether have we lorn.
Tertius Pastor. Marry, God forbid, say it not!
Secundus Pastor. Who should do us that scorn? That were a foul spot.
Primus Pastor. Some shrew.
I have sought with my dogs
All Horbury Shrogs,
And of fifteen hogs
Found I all but one ewe.

Tertius Pastor. Now trust me, if you will, by Saint Thomas of Kent,
Either Mak or Gill their aid thereto lent!
Primus Pastor. Peace, man, be still! I saw when he went.
Thou dost slander him ill. Thou shouldest repent
At once, indeed!
Secundus Pastor. So may I thrive, perdie,
Should I die here where I be,
I would say it was he
That did that same deed!

Tertius Pastor. Go we thither, quick sped, and run on our feet,
I shall never eat bread till I know all complete!
Primus Pastor. Nor drink in my head till with him I meet.
Secundus Pastor. In no place will I bed until I him greet,
My brother!
One vow I will plight,
Till I see him in sight,
I will ne'er sleep one night
Where I do another!

[They go to Mak's *house.* Mak, *hearing them coming, begins to sing lullaby at the top of his voice, while* Gill *groans in concert.]*

Tertius Pastor. Hark the row they make! List our sire there croon!
Primus Pastor. Never heard I voice break so clear out of tune.
Call to him.
Secundus Pastor. Mak, wake there! Undo your door soon!
Mak. Who is that spake as if it were noon?
Aloft?
Who is that, I say?
Tertius Pastor. Good fellows, if it were day — *[Mocking* Mak.*]*
Mak. As far as ye may,
Kindly, speak soft;

O'er a sick woman's head in such grievous throes!
I were liefer dead than she should suffer such woes.
Uxor. Go elsewhere, well sped. Oh, how my pain grows —
Each footfall ye tread goes straight through my nose
So loud, woe's me!
Primus Pastor. Tell us, Mak, if ye may,
How fare ye, I say?
Mak. But are ye in this town to-day —
Now how fare ye?

Ye have run in the mire and are wet still a bit,
I will make you a fire, if ye will sit.
A nurse I would hire — can you help me in it?
Well quit is my hire — my dream the truth hit —

In season.
I have bairns, if ye knew,
Plenty more than will do,
But we must drink as we brew,
And that is but reason.

I would ye would eat ere ye go. Methinks that ye sweat.
Secundus Pastor. Nay, no help could we know in what's drunken or eat.
Mak. Why, sir, ails you aught but good, though?
Tertius Pastor. Yea, our sheep that we get
Are stolen as they go; our loss is great.
Mak. Sirs, drink!
Had I been there,
Some one had bought it sore, I swear.
Primus Pastor. Marry, some men trow that ye were,
And that makes us think!

Secundus Pastor. Mak, one and another trows it should be ye.
Tertius Pastor. Either ye or your spouse, so say we.
Mak. Now if aught suspicion throws on Gill or me,
Come and search our house, and then may ye see
Who had her —
If I any sheep got,
Or cow or stot;
And Gill, my wife, rose not,
Here since we laid her.

As I am true and leal, to God, here I pray
That this is the first meal that I shall eat this day.
Primus Pastor. Mak, as may I have weal, advise thee, I say —
"He learned timely to steal that could not say nay."
Uxor. Me, my death you've dealt!
Out, ye thieves, nor come again,
Ye've come just to rob us, that's plain.
Mak. Hear ye not how she groans amain —
Your hearts should melt!
Uxor. From my child, thieves, begone. Go nigh him not, — there's the door!
Mak. If ye knew all she's borne, your hearts would be sore.
Ye do wrong, I you warn, thus to come in before
A woman that has borne — but I say no more.
Uxor. Oh, my middle — I die!
I vow to God so mild,
If ever I you beguiled,
That I will eat this child
That doth in this cradle lie!

Mak. Peace, woman, by God's pain, and cry not so.
Thou dost hurt thy brain and fill me with woe.
Secundus Pastor. I trow our sheep is slain. What find ye two, though?
Our work's all in vain. We may as well go.
Save clothes and such matters
I can find no flesh
Hard or nesh,
Salt nor fresh,
Except two empty platters.

Of any "cattle" but this, tame or wild, that we see,
None, as may I have bliss, smelled as loud as he.
Uxor. No, so God joy and bliss of my child may give me!
Primus Pastor. We have aimed amiss; deceived, I trow, were we.
Secundus Pastor. Sir, wholly each one.
Sir, Our Lady him save!
Is your child a knave?
Mak. Any lord might him have,
This child, for his son.

When he wakes, so he grips, it's a pleasure to see.
Tertius Pastor. Good luck to his hips, and blessing, say we!
But who were his gossips, now tell who they be?
Mak. Blest be their lips —
[*Hesitates, at a loss.*]

PRIMUS PASTOR. [*aside*]. Hark a lie now, trust me!
MAK. So may God them thank,
Parkin and Gibbon Waller, I say,
And gentle John Horn, in good fey —
He made all the fun and play —
With the great shank.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Mak, friends will we be, for we are at one.
MAK. We! — nay, count not on me, for amends get I none.
Farewell, all three! Glad 'twill be when ye're gone!
[*The* SHEPHERDS *go.*]
TERTIUS PASTOR. "Fair words there may be, but love there is none
This year."
PRIMUS PASTOR. Gave ye the child anything?
SECUNDUS PASTOR. I trow, not one farthing.
TERTIUS PASTOR. Fast back I will fling.
Await ye me here.

[DAW *goes back. The other* SHEPHERDS *turn and follow him slowly, entering while he is talking with* MAK.]

[TERTIUS PASTOR.] Mak, I trust thou'lt not grieve, if I go to thy child.
MAK. Nay, great hurt I receive, — thou hast acted full wild.
TERTIUS PASTOR. Thy bairn 'twill not grieve, little day-star so mild.
Mak, by your leave, let me give your child
But six-pence.
[DAW *goes to cradle, and starts to draw away the covering.*]
MAK. Nay, stop it — he sleeps!
TERTIUS PASTOR. Methinks he peeps —
MAK. When he wakens, he weeps;
I pray you go hence!
[*The other* SHEPHERDS *return.*]

TERTIUS PASTOR. Give me leave him to kiss, and lift up the clout.
What the devil is this? — he has a long snout!
PRIMUS PASTOR. He's birth-marked amiss. We waste time hereabout.
SECUNDUS PASTOR. "A weft that ill-spun is comes ever foul out."
[*He sees the sheep.*]
Aye — so!
He is like to our sheep!
TERTIUS PASTOR. Ho, Gib, may I peep?
PRIMUS PASTOR. I trow "Nature will creep
Where it may not go."

SECUNDUS PASTOR. This was a quaint gaud and a far cast.
It was a high fraud.
TERTIUS PASTOR. Yea, sirs, that was't.
Let's burn this bawd, and bind her fast.
"A false scold," by the Lord, "will hang at the last!"
So shalt thou!
Will ye see how they swaddle
His four feet in the middle!
Saw I never in the cradle
A horned lad ere now!

MAK. Peace, I say! Tell ye what, this to-do ye can spare!
[*Pretending anger.*]
It was I him begot and yon woman him bare.
PRIMUS PASTOR. What the devil for name has he got? Mak? — Lo, God, Mak's heir!
SECUNDUS PASTOR. Come, joke with him not. Now, may God give him care,
I say!
UXOR. A pretty child is he
As sits on a woman's knee,
A dilly-down, perdie,
To make a man gay.

TERTIUS PASTOR. I know him by the ear-mark — that is a good token.
MAK. I tell you, sirs, hark, his nose was broken —
Then there told me a clerk he'd been mis-spoken.
PRIMUS PASTOR. Ye deal falsely and dark; I would fain be wroken.
Get a weapon, — go!
UXOR. He was taken by an elf,
I saw it myself.

When the clock struck twelve,
Was he mis-shapen so.

Secundus Pastor. Ye two are at one, that's plain, in all ye've done and said.
Primus Pastor. Since their theft they maintain, let us leave them dead!
Mak. If I trespass again, strike off my head!
At your will I remain.
Tertius Pastor. Sirs, take my counsel instead.
For this trespass
We'll neither curse nor wrangle in spite,
Chide nor fight,
But have done forthright,
And toss him in canvas.
[*They toss* Mak *in one of* Gill's *canvas sheets till they are tired. He disappears groaning into his house. The* Shepherds *pass over to the moor on the other side of the stage.*]

Primus Pastor. Lord, lo! but I am sore, like to burst, in back and breast.
In faith, I may no more, therefore will I rest.
Secundus Pastor. Like a sheep of seven score he weighed in my fist.
To sleep anywhere, therefore seemeth now best.
Tertius Pastor. Now I you pray,
On this green let us lie.
Primus Pastor. O'er those thieves yet chafe I.
Tertius Pastor. Let your anger go by, —
Come do as I say.

[*As they are about to lie down* The Angel *appears.*]
(Angelus *cantat "Gloria in excelsis." Postea dicat:*)

Angelus. Rise, herdsmen gentle, attend ye, for now is he born
From the fiend that shall rend what Adam had lorn,
That warlock to shend, this night is he born,
God is made your friend now on this morn.
Lo! thus doth he command —
Go to Bethlehem, see
Where he lieth so free,
In a manger full lowly
'Twixt where twain beasts stand.
[The Angel *goes.*]

Primus Pastor. This was a fine voice, even as ever I heard.
It is a marvel, by St. Stephen, thus with dread to be stirred.
Secundus Pastor. 'Twas of God's Son from heaven he these tidings averred.
All the wood with a levin, methought at his word
Shone fair.
Tertius Pastor. Of a Child did he tell,
In Bethlehem, mark ye well.
Primus Pastor. That this star yonder doth spell —
Let us seek him there.

Secundus Pastor. Say, what was his song — how it went, did ye hear?
Three breves to a long —
Tertius Pastor. Marry, yes, to my ear
There was no crotchet wrong, naught it lacked and full clear!
Primus Pastor. To sing it here, us among, as he nicked it, full near,
I know how —
Secundus Pastor. Let's see how you croon!
Can you bark at the moon?
Tertius Pastor. Hold your tongues, have done!
Hark after me now! [*They sing.*]

Secundus Pastor. To Bethlehem he bade that we should go.
I am sore adrad that we tarry too slow.
Tertius Pastor. Be merry, and not sad — our song's of mirth not of woe,
To be forever glad as our meed may we know,
Without noise.
Primus Pastor. Hie we thither, then, speedily,
Though we be wet and weary,

To that Child and that Lady! —
We must not lose those joys!

Secundus Pastor. We find by the prophecy — let be your din! —
David and Isaiah, and more that I mind me therein,
They prophesied by clergy, that in a virgin,
Should he alight and lie, to assuage our sin,
And slake it,
Our nature, from woe,
For it was Isaiah said so,
"*Ecce virgo*
Concipiet" a child that is naked.

Tertius Pastor. Full glad may we be and await that day
That lovesome one to see, that all mights doth sway.
Lord, well it were with me, now and for aye,
Might I kneel on my knee some word for to say
To that child.
But the angel said
In a crib was he laid,
He was poorly arrayed,
Both gracious and mild.

Primus Pastor. Patriarchs that have been and prophets beforne,
They desired to have seen this child that is born.
They are gone full clean, — that have they lorn.
We shall see him, I ween, ere it be morn,
For token.
When I see him and feel,
I shall know full well,
It is true as steel,
What prophets have spoken,

To so poor as we are that he would appear,
First find and declare by his messenger.
Secundus Pastor. Go we now, let us fare, the place is us near.
Tertius Pastor. I am ready and eager to be there; let us together with cheer
To that bright one go.
Lord, if thy will it be,
Untaught are we all three,
Some kind of joy grant us, that we
Thy creatures, comfort may know!

[*They enter the stable and adore the infant Saviour.*]

Primus Pastor. Hail, thou comely and clean one! Hail, young Child!
Hail, Maker, as I mean, from a maiden so mild!
Thou hast harried, I ween, the warlock so wild, —
The false beguiler with his teen now goes beguiled.
Lo, he merries,
Lo, he laughs, my sweeting!
A happy meeting!
Here's my promised greeting, —
Have a bob of cherries!

Secundus Pastor. Hail, sovereign Saviour, for thou hast us sought!
Hail, noble nursling and flower, that all things hast wrought!
Hail, thou, full of gracious power, that made all from nought!
Hail, I kneel and I cower! A bird have I brought
To my bairn from far.
Hail, little tiny mop!
Of our creed thou art the crop,
I fain would drink in thy cup,
Little day-star!

Tertius Pastor. Hail, darling dear one, full of Godhead indeed!
I pray thee be near, when I have need.
Hail, sweet is thy cheer! My heart would bleed
To see thee sit here in so poor a weed,
With no pennies.
Hail, put forth thy dall,
I bring thee but a ball,
Keep it, and play with it withal,
And go to the tennis.

Maria. The Father of Heaven this night, God omnipotent,
That setteth all things aright, his Son hath he sent.
My name he named and did light on me ere that he went.

I conceived him forthright through his might as he meant,
And now he is born.
May he keep you from woe!
I shall pray him do so.
Tell it, forth as ye go,
And remember this morn.

Primus Pastor. Farewell, Lady, so fair to behold
With thy child on thy knee!
Secundus Pastor. But he lies full cold!
Lord, 'tis well with me! Now we go, behold!
Tertius Pastor. Forsooth, already it seems to be told
Full oft!
Primus Pastor. What grace we have found!
Secundus Pastor. Now are we won safe and sound.
Tertius Pastor. Come forth, to sing are we bound.
Make it ring then aloft!
[*They depart singing.*]

Explicit pagina Pastorum.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER

(*c.* 1553)

[DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Ralph Roister Doister
Mathew Merygreeke
Gawyn Goodluck, affianced to Dame Custance
Tristram Trustie, his friend
Dobinet Doughtie, boy to Roister Doister
Tom Trupenie, servant to Dame Custance
Sym Suresby, servant to Goodluck
Scrivener
Harpax

Dame Christian Custance, a widow
Margerie Mumblecrust, her nurse
Tibet Talkapace } her maidens
Annot Alyface }

Scene: London.]

THE PROLOGUE

What creature is in health, either young or old,
But some mirth with modesty will be glad to use? —
As we in this interlude shall now unfold,
Wherein all scurrility we utterly refuse,
Avoiding such mirth wherein is abuse,
Knowing nothing more commendable for a man's recreation
Than mirth which is used in an honest fashion.

For mirth prolongeth life, and causeth health,
Mirth recreates our spirits and voideth pensiveness,
Mirth increaseth amity, not hindering our wealth,
Mirth is to be used both of more and less,
Being mixed with virtue in decent comeliness,
As we trust no good nature can gainsay the same;
Which mirth we intend to use, avoiding all blame.

The wise poets long time heretofore
Under merry comedies secrets did declare,
Wherein was contained very virtuous lore,
With mysteries and forewarnings very rare.
Such to write neither Plautus nor Terence did spare,
Which among the learned at this day bears the bell;
These, with such other, therein did excel.

Our comedy, or interlude, which we intend to play
Is named *Roister Doister* indeed,
Which against the vainglorious doth inveigh,
Whose humour the roisting sort continually doth feed.
Thus by your patience we intend to proceed
In this our interlude by God's leave and grace;
And here I take my leave for a certain space.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER

ACTUS I, SCÆNA I

Mathew Merygreeke. *He entereth singing.*

As long liveth the merry man, they say,
As doth the sorry man, and longer, by a day.
Yet the grasshopper, for all his summer piping,
Starveth in winter with hungry griping.
Therefore another said saw doth men advise,
That they be together both merry and wise.
This lesson must I practise, or else ere long,
With me, Mathew Merygreeke, it will be wrong.
Indeed men so call me, for by Him that us bought,
Whatever chance betide, I can take no thought,
Yet wisdom would that I did myself bethink
Where to be provided this day of meat and drink —
For know ye that, for all this merry note of mine,
He might appose me now that should ask where I dine.
My living lieth here and there, of God's grace,
Sometime with this good man, sometime in that place;
Sometime Lewis Loytrer biddeth me come near;
Somewhiles Watkin Waster maketh us good cheer,
Sometime Davy Diceplayer, when he hath well cast,
Keepeth revel rout as long as it will last;
Sometime Tom Titivile maketh us a feast;
Sometime with Sir Hugh Pye I am a bidden guest;
Sometime at Nicol Neverthrive's I get a sop;
Sometime I am feasted with Bryan Blinkinsoppe;
Sometime I hang on Hankyn Hoddydodie's sleeve;
But this day on Ralph Roister Doister's, by his leave.
For, truly, of all men he is my chief banker
Both for meat and money, and my chief shoot-anchor.
For, sooth Roister Doister in that he doth say,
And, require what ye will, ye shall have no nay.
But now of Roister Doister somewhat to express,
That ye may esteem him after his worthiness,
In these twenty towns, and seek them throughout,
Is not the like stock whereon to graff a lout.
All the day long is he facing and craking
Of his great acts in fighting and fray-making,
But when Roister Doister is put to his proof,
To keep the Queen's peace is more for his behoof.
If any woman smile, or cast on him an eye,
Up is he to the hard ears in love by and by;
And in all the hot haste must she be his wife,
Else farewell his good days, and farewell his life;
Master Ralph Roister Doister is but dead and gone
Except she on him take some compassion.
Then chief of counsel must be Mathew Merygreeke,
"What if I for marriage to such an one seek?"
Then must I sooth it, whatever it is —

For what he sayeth or doeth cannot be amiss;
Hold up his yea and nay, be his nown white son,
Praise and roose him well, and ye have his heart won,
For so well liketh he his own fond fashions
That he taketh pride of false commendations.
But such sport have I with him as I would not lese,
Though I should be bound to live with bread and cheese.
For exalt him, and have him as ye lust indeed —
Yea, to hold his finger in a hole for a need.
I can with a word make him fain or loth,
I can with as much make him pleased or wroth,
I can, when I will, make him merry and glad,
I can, when me lust, make him sorry and sad,
I can set him in hope and eke in despair,
I can make him speak rough, and make him speak fair.
But I marvel I see him not all this same day;
I will seek him out. — But, lo! he cometh this way.
I have yond espied him sadly coming,
And in love, for twenty pound, by his gloming!

ACTUS I, SCÆNA II

Rafe Roister Doister. Mathew Merygreeke.

R. Roister. Come death when thou wilt, I am weary of my life.
M. Mery. [*aside*]. I told you, I, we should woo another wife.
R. Roister. Why did God make me such a goodly person?
M. Mery. He is in by the week, we shall have sport anon.
R. Roister. And where is my trusty friend, Mathew Merygreeke?
M. Mery. I will make as I saw him not, he doth me seek.
R. Roister. I have him espied me thinketh, yond is he.
Ho! Mathew Merygreeke, my friend, a word with thee.
M. Mery. I will not hear him, but make as I had haste.
Farewell all my good friends, the time away doth waste,
And the tide, they say, tarrieth for no man.
R. Roister. Thou must with thy good counsel help me if thou can.
M. Mery. God keep thee, worshipful Master Roister Doister,
And fare well thee, lusty Master Roister Doister.
R. Roister. I must needs speak with thee a word or twain.
M. Mery. Within a month or two I will be here again.
Negligence in great affairs, ye know, may mar all.
R. Roister. Attend upon me now, and well reward thee I shall.
M. Mery. I have take my leave, and the tide is well spent.
R. Roister. I die except thou help, I pray thee be content.
Do thy part well now, and ask what thou wilt,
For without thy aid my matter is all spilt.
M. Mery. Then to serve your turn I will some pains take,
And let all mine own affairs alone for your sake.
R. Roister. My whole hope and trust resteth only in thee.
M. Mery. Then can ye not do amiss, whatever it be.
R. Roister. Gramercies, Merygreeke, most bound to thee I am.
M. Mery. But up with that heart, and speak out like a ram!
Ye speak like a capon that had the cough now.
Be of good cheer, anon ye shall do well enow.
R. Roister. Upon thy comfort, I will all things well handle.
M. Mery. So, lo, that is a breast to blow out a candle!
But what is this great matter, I would fain know?
We shall find remedy therefore I trow.

Do ye lack money? Ye know mine old offers;
Ye have always a key to my purse and coffers.
R. Roister. I thank thee! had ever man such a friend!
M. Mery. Ye give unto me, I must needs to you lend.
R. Roister. Nay, I have money plenty all things to discharge.
M. Mery. [*aside*]. That knew I right well when I made offer so large.
[R. Roister.] But it is no such matter.
M. Mery. What is it then?
Are ye in danger of debt to any man?
If ye be, take no thought nor be not afraid.
Let them hardly take thought how they shall be paid.
R. Roister. Tut, I owe nought.
M. Mery. What then? fear ye imprisonment?
R. Roister. No.
M. Mery. No, I wist ye offend not, so to be shent.
But if ye had, the Tower could not you so hold,
But to break out at all times ye would be bold.
What is it — hath any man threatened you to beat?
R. Roister. What is he that durst have put me in that heat?
He that beateth me, by His arms, shall well find,
That I will not be far from him nor run behind.
M. Mery. That thing know all men ever since ye overthrew
The fellow of the lion which Hercules slew.
But what is it then?
R. Roister. Of love I make my moan.
M. Mery. "Ah, this foolish-a love, wil't ne'er let us alone?"
But because ye were refused the last day,
Ye said ye would ne'er more be entangled that way —
"I would meddle no more, since I find all so unkind."
R. Roister. Yea, but I cannot so put love out of my mind.
M. Mery. But is your love, tell me first in any wise,
In the way of marriage, or of merchandise?
If it may otherwise than lawful be found,
Ye get none of my help for a hundred pound.
R. Roister. No, by my troth, I would have her to my wife.
M. Mery. Then are ye a good man, and God save your life!
And what or who is she, with whom ye are in love?
R. Roister. A woman whom I know not by what means to move.
M. Mery. Who is it?
R. Roister. A woman yond.
M. Mery. What is her name?
R. Roister. Her yonder.
M. Mery. Whom?
R. Roister. Mistress — ah—
M. Mery. Fie, fie, for shame!
Love ye, and know not whom — but "her yond," "a woman?"
We shall then get you a wife, I cannot tell whan.
R. Roister. The fair woman, that supped with us yesternight,
And I heard her name twice or thrice, and had it right.
M. Mery. Yea, ye may see ye ne'er take me to good cheer with you, —
If ye had, I could have told you her name now.
R. Roister. I was to blame indeed, but the next time perchance —
And she dwelleth in this house.
M. Mery. What, Christian Custance?
R. Roister. Except I have her to my wife, I shall run mad.
M. Mery. Nay, "unwise" perhaps, but I warrant you for "mad."
R. Roister. I am utterly dead unless I have my desire.
M. Mery. Where be the bellows that blew this sudden fire?
R. Roister. I hear she is worth a thousand pound and more.
M. Mery. Yea, but learn this one lesson of me afore —

An hundred pound of marriage-money, doubtless,
Is ever thirty pound sterling, or somewhat less;
So that her thousand pound, if she be thrifty,
Is much near about two hundred and fifty.
Howbeit, wooers and widows are never poor.
R. Roister. Is she a widow? I love her better therefore.
M. Mery. But I hear she hath made promise to another.
R. Roister. He shall go without her, and he were my brother!
M. Mery. I have heard say, I am right well advised,
That she hath to Gawyn Goodluck promised.
R. Roister. What is that Gawyn Goodluck?
M. Mery. A merchant-man.
R. Roister. Shall he speed afore me? Nay, sir, by sweet Saint Anne!
Ah, sir, "'Backare,' quod Mortimer to his sow,"
I will have her mine own self I make God avow.
For I tell thee, she is worth a thousand pound.
M. Mery. Yet a fitter wife for your maship might be found.
Such a goodly man as you might get one with land,
Besides pounds of gold a thousand and a thousand,
And a thousand, and a thousand, and a thousand,
And so to the sum of twenty hundred thousand.
Your most goodly personage is worthy of no less.
R. Roister. I am sorry God made me so comely, doubtless,
For that maketh me eachwhere so highly favoured,
And all women on me so enamoured.
M. Mery. "Enamoured," quod you? — have ye spied out that?
Ah, sir, marry, now I see you know what is what.
"Enamoured," ka? marry, sir, say that again,
But I thought not ye had marked it so plain.
R. Roister. Yes, eachwhere they gaze all upon me and stare.
M. Mery. Yea, Malkyn, I warrant you, as much as they dare.
And ye will not believe what they say in the street,
When your maship passeth by, all such as I meet,
That sometimes I can scarce find what answer to make.
"Who is this," saith one, "Sir Launcelot du Lake?"
"Who is this — great Guy of Warwick?" saith another.
"No," say I, "it is the thirteenth Hercules' brother."
"Who is this — noble Hector of Troy," saith the third.
"No, but of the same nest," say I, "it is a bird."
"Who is this — great Goliah, Sampson, or Colbrand?"
"No," say I, "but it is a brute of the Alie Land."
"Who is this — great Alexander, or Charle le Maigne?"
"No, it is the tenth Worthy," say I to them again. —
I know not if I said well.
R. Roister. Yes, for so I am.
M. Mery. Yea, for there were but nine Worthies before ye came.
To some others, the third Cato I do you call.
And so, as well as I can, I answer them all.
"Sir, I pray you, what lord or great gentleman is this?"
"Master Ralph Roister Doister, dame," say I, "ywis."
"O Lord," saith she then, "what a goodly man it is.
Would Christ I had such a husband as he is!"
"O Lord," say some, "that the sight of his face we lack!"
"It is enough for you," say I, "to see his back.

His face is for ladies of high and noble parages,
With whom he hardly 'scapeth great marriages" —
With much more than this, and much otherwise.
R. Roister. I can thee thank that thou canst such answers devise;
But I perceive thou dost me throughly know.
M. Mery. I mark your manners for mine own learning, I trow,
But such is your beauty, and such are your acts,
Such is your personage, and such are your facts,
That all women, fair and foul, more and less,
They eye you, they lub you, they talk of you doubtless.
Your p[l]easant look maketh them all merry;
Ye pass not by, but they laugh till they be weary;
Yea and money could I have, the truth to tell,
Of many, to bring you that way where they dwell.
R. Roister. Merygreeke, for this thy reporting well of me —
M. Mery. What should I else, sir? It is my duty, pardee.
R. Roister. I promise thou shalt not lack, while I have a groat.
M. Mery. Faith, sir, and I ne'er had more need of a new coat.
R. Roister. Thou shalt have one tomorrow, and gold for to spend.
M. Mery. Then I trust to bring the day to a good end;
For, as for mine own part, having money enow,
I could live only with the remembrance of you.
But now to your widow whom you love so hot.
R. Roister. By Cock, thou sayest truth! I had almost forgot.
M. Mery. What if Christian Custance will not have you, what?
R. Roister. Have me? Yes, I warrant you, never doubt of that;
I know she loveth me, but she dare not speak.
M. Mery. Indeed, meet it were some body should it break.
R. Roister. She looked on me twenty times yesternight,
And laughed so —
M. Mery. That she could not sit upright.
R. Roister. No, faith, could she not.
M. Mery. No, even such a thing I cast.
R. Roister. But for wooing, thou knowest, women are shamefast.
But, and she knew my mind, I know she would be glad,
And think it the best chance that ever she had.
M. Mery. To her then like a man, and be bold forth to start!
Wooers never speed well that have a false heart.
R. Roister. What may I best do?
M. Mery. Sir, remain ye awhile [here].
Ere long one or other of her house will appear.
Ye know my mind.
R. Roister. Yea, now, hardly, let me alone!
M. Mery. In the meantime, sir, if you please, I will home, —
And call your musicians, for, in this your case,
It would set you forth, and all your wooing grace;
Ye may not lack your instruments to play and sing.
R. Roister. Thou knowest I can do that.
M. Mery. As well as anything.
Shall I go call your folks, that ye may show a cast?
R. Roister. Yea, run, I beseech thee, in all possible haste.
M. Mery. I go. (*Exeat.*)
R. Roister. Yea, for I love singing out of measure,
It comforteth my spirits and doth me great pleasure.
But who cometh forth yond from my sweetheart Custance?
My matter frameth well, this is a lucky chance.

ACTUS I, SCÆNA III

Madge Mumblecrust, *spinning on the distaff.* Tibet Talkapace, *sewing.* Annot Alyface, *knitting.* R. Roister.

M. Mumble. If this distaff were spun, Margerie Mumblecrust —
Tib. Talk. Where good stale ale is, will drink no water, I trust.
M. Mumble. Dame Custance hath promised us good ale and white bread.
Tib. Talk. If she keep not promise, I will beshrew her head:
But it will be stark night before I shall have done.
R. Roister. I will stand here awhile, and talk with them anon.
I hear them speak of Custance, which doth my heart good;
To hear her name spoken doth even comfort my blood.
M. Mumble. Sit down to your work, Tibet, like a good girl.
Tib. Talk. Nurse, meddle you with your spindle and your whirl!
No haste but, good Madge Mumblecrust, for "whip and whur,"
The old proverb doth say, "never made good fur."
M. Mumble. Well, ye will sit down to your work anon, I trust.
Tib. Talk. "Soft fire maketh sweet malt," good Madge Mumblecrust.
M. Mumble. And sweet malt maketh jolly good ale for the nones.
Tib. Talk. Which will slide down the lane without any bones. (*Cantet.*)
"Old brown bread crusts must have much good mumbling,
But good ale down your throat hath good easy tumbling."
R. Roister. The jolliest wench that ere I heard, little mouse!
May I not rejoice that she shall dwell in my house!
Tib. Talk. So, sirrah, now this gear beginneth for to frame.
M. Mumble. Thanks to God, though your work stand still, your tongue is not lame.
Tib. Talk. And though your teeth be gone, both so sharp and so fine,
Yet your tongue can run on pattens as well as mine.
M. Mumble. Ye were not for nought named Tib Talkapace.
Tib. Talk. Do thmy talk grieve you? Alack, God save your grace!
M. Mumble. I hold a groat ye will drink anon for this gear.

[*Enter* Annot.]

Tib. Talk. And I will pray you the stripes for me to bear.
M. Mumble. I hold a penny ye will drink without a cup.
Tib. Talk. Whereinsoe'er ye drink, I wot ye drink all up.
An. Alyface. By Cock, and well sewed, my good Tibet Talkapace!
Tib. Talk. And e'en as well knit, my nown Annot Alyface.
R. Roister. See what a sort she keepeth that must be my wife!
Shall not I, when I have her, lead a merry life?
Tib. Talk. Welcome, my good wench, and sit here by me just.
An. Alyface. And how doth our old beldame here, Madge Mumblecrust?
Tib. Talk. Chide, and find faults, and threaten to complain.
An. Alyface. To make us poor girls shent to her is small gain.
M. Mumble. I did neither chide, nor complain, nor threaten.
R. Roister. It would grieve my heart to see one of them beaten.
M. Mumble. I did nothing but bid her work and hold her peace.
Tib. Talk. So would I, if you could your clattering cease —
But the devil cannot make old trot hold her tongue.
An. Alyface. Let all these matters pass, and we three sing a song,
So shall we pleasantly both the time beguile now,
And eke dispatch all our works ere we can tell how.
Tib. Talk. I shrew them that say nay, and that shall not be I.

M. Mumble. And I am well content.
Tib. Talk. Sing on then, by and by.
R. Roister. And I will not away, but listen to their song,
Yet Merygreeke and my folks tarry very long.

(Tib., An., *and* Margerie *do sing here.*)

Pipe, merry Annot! etc.
Trilla, trilla, trillarie.
Work, Tibet! work, Annot! work, Margerie!
Sew, Tibet! knit, Annot! spin, Margerie!
Let us see who shall win the victory.

Tib. Talk. This sleeve is not willing to be sewed, I trow.
A small thing might make me all in the ground to throw.
(*Then they sing again.*)

Pipe, merry Annot! etc.
Trilla, trilla, trillarie.
What, Tibet! what, Annot! what, Margerie!
Ye sleep, but we do not, that shall we try.
Your fingers be numbed, our work will not lie.

Tib. Talk. If ye do so again, well I would advise you nay.
In good sooth one stop more, and I make holiday.
(*They sing the third time.*)

Pipe, merry Annot! etc.
Trilla, trilla, trillarie.
Now, Tibet! now, Annot, now, Margerie!
Now whippet apace for the maistry,
But it will not be, our mouth is so dry.

Tib. Talk. Ah, each finger is a thumb to-day, methink;
I care not to let all alone, choose it swim or sink.
(*They sing the fourth time.*)

Pipe, merry Annot, etc.
Trilla, trilla, trillarie.
When, Tibet? when, Annot? when, Margerie?
I will not, I cannot, no more can I.
Then give we all over, and there let it lie.
(*Let her cast down her work.*)

Tib. Talk. There it lieth; the worst is but a curried coat —
Tut, I am used thereto, I care not a groat!
An. Alyface. Have we done singing since? Then will I in again.
Here I found you, and here I leave both twain.
(*Exeat.*)
M. Mumble. And I will not be long after — Tib Talkapace!
Tib. Talk. What is the matter?
M. Mumble. Yond stood a man all this space
And hath heard all that ever we spake together.
Tib. Talk. Marry, the more lout he for his coming hither,
And the less good he can to listen maidens talk.
I care not, and I go bid him hence for to walk;
It were well done to know what he maketh hereaway.
R. Roister. Now might I speak to them, if I wist what to say.
M. Mumble. Nay, we will go both off, and see what he is.
R. Roister. One that hath heard all your talk and singing, i-wis.
Tib. Talk. The more to blame you! A good thrifty husband
Would elsewhere have had some better matters in hand.
R. Roister. I did it for no harm, but for good love I bear
To your dame mistress Custance, I did your talk hear.
And, mistress nurse, I will kiss you for acquaintance.
M. Mumble. I come anon, sir.
Tib. Talk. Faith, I would our dame Custance
Saw this gear.
M. Mumble. I must first wipe all clean, yea, I must.
Tib. Talk. Ill chieve it, doting fool, but it must be cust.
M. Mumble. God yelde you, sir; chad not so much, ichotte not when —
Ne'er since chwas bore, — chwine — of such a gay gentleman.
R. Roister. I will kiss you too, maiden, for the good will I bear you.
Tib. Talk. No, forsooth, by your leave, ye shall not kiss me.
R. Roister. Yes, be not afeard, I do not disdain you a whit.

Tib. Talk. Why should I fear you? I have not so little wit —
Ye are but a man I know very well.
R. Roister. Why then?
Tib. Talk. Forsooth for I will not! I use not to kiss men.
R. Roister. I would fain kiss you too, good maiden, if I might.
Tib. Talk. What should that need?
R. Roister. But to honour you by this light.
I use to kiss all them that I love, to God I vow.
Tib. Talk. Yea, sir? — I pray you, when did ye last kiss your cow?
R. Roister. Ye might be proud to kiss me, if ye were wise.
Tib. Talk. What promotion were therein?
R. Roister. Nurse is not so nice.
Tib. Talk. Well, I have not been taught to kissing and licking.
R. Roister. Yet I thank you, mistress nurse, ye made no sticking.
M. Mumble. I will not stick for a kiss with such a man as you.
Tib. Talk. They that lust —! I will again to my sewing now.

[*Enter* Annot.]

An. Alyface. Tidings, ho! tidings! dame Custance greeteth you well.
R. Roister. Whom? me?
An. Alyface. You, sir? No, sir! I do no such tale tell.
R. Roister. But and she knew me here.
An. Alyface. Tibet Talkapace,
Your mistress Custance and mine, must speak with your grace.
Tib. Talk. With me ?
An. Alyface. Ye must come in to her, out of all doubts.
Tib. Talk. And my work not half done? A mischief on all louts. (*Ex. am.*)
R. Roister. Ah, good sweet nurse!
M. Mumble. Ah, good sweet gentleman!
R. Roister. What?
M. Mumble. Nay, I cannot tell, sir, but what thing would you?
R. Roister. How doth sweet Custance, my heart of gold, tell me how?
M. Mumble. She doth very well, sir, and command me to you.
R. Roister. To me?
M. Mumble. Yea, to you, sir.
R. Roister. To me? Nurse, tell me plain,
To me?
M. Mumble. Ye.
R. Roister. That word maketh me alive again.
M. Mumble. She command me to one, last day, whoe'er it was.
R. Roister. That was e'en to me and none other, by the Mass.
M. Mumble. I cannot tell you surely, but one it was.
R. Roister. It was I and none other; this cometh to good pass.
I promise thee, nurse, I favour her.
M. Mumble. E'en so, sir.
R. Roister. Bid her sue to me for marriage.
M. Mumble. E'en so, sir.
R. Roister. And surely for thy sake she shall speed.
M. Mumble. E'en so, sir.
R. Roister. I shall be contented to take her.
M. Mumble. E'en so, sir.
R. Roister. But at thy request and for thy sake.
M. Mumble. E'en so, sir.
R. Roister. And come — hark in thine ear what to say.
M. Mumble. E'en so, sir.
(*Here let him tell her a great lon tale in her ear.*)

ACTUS I, SCÆNA IV

Mathew Merygreeke. Dobinet Doughtie. Harpax. [*Musicians.*] Ralph Roister. Margerie Mumblecrust.

M. Mery. Come on, sirs, apace, and quit yourselves like men,
Your pains shall be rewarded.
D. Dough. But I wot not when.
M. Mery. Do your master worship as ye have done in time past.
D. Dough. Speak to them; of mine office he shall have a cast.

M. MERY. Harpax, look that thou do well too, and thy fellow.
HARPAX. I warrant, if he will mine example follow.
M. MERY. Curtsy, whoresons, duck you, and crouch at every word.
D. DOUGH. Yes, whether our master speak earnest or bord.
M. MERY. For this lieth upon his preferment indeed.
D. DOUGH. Oft is he a wooer, but never doth he speed.
M. MERY. But with whom is he now so sadly rounding yond?
D. DOUGH. With "*Nobs, nicebecetur, miserere*" fond.
M. MERY. God be at your wedding, be ye sped already?
I did not suppose that your love was so greedy.
I perceive now ye have chose of devotion,
And joy have ye, lady, of your promotion.
R. ROISTER. Tush, fool, thou art deceived, this is not she.
M. MERY. Well, mock much of her, and keep her well, I 'vise ye.
I will take no charge of such a fair piece' keeping.
M. MUMBLE. What aileth this fellow? he driveth me to weeping.
M. MERY. What, weep on the wedding day? Be merry, woman,
Though I say it, ye have chose a good gentleman.
R. ROISTER. Cocks nouns, what meanest thou, man? tut-a-whistle!
M. MERY. Ah, sir, be good to her; she is but a gristle.
Ah, sweet lamb and coney!
R. ROISTER. Tut, thou art deceived.
M. MERY. Weep no more, lady, ye shall be well received.
Up with some merry noise, sirs, to bring home the bride.
R. ROISTER. Gogs arms, knave, art thou mad? I tell thee thou art wide.
M. MERY. Then ye intend by night to have her home brought.
R. ROISTER. I tell thee no.
M. MERY. How then?
R. ROISTER. 'Tis neither meant ne thought.
M. MERY. What shall we then do with her?
R. ROISTER. Ah, foolish harebrain,
This is not she.
M. MERY. No is! Why then, unsaid again!
And what young girl is this with your maship so bold?
R. ROISTER. A girl?
M. MERY. Yea — I dare say, scarce yet three score year old.
R. ROISTER. This same is the fair widow's nurse, of whom ye wot.
M. MERY. Is she but a nurse of a house? Hence home, old trot,
Hence at once!
R. ROISTER. No, no.
M. MERY. What, an please your maship,
A nurse talk so homely with one of your worship?
R. ROISTER. I will have it so: it is my pleasure and will.
M. MERY. Then I am content. Nurse, come again, tarry still.
R. ROISTER. What, she will help forward this my suit for her part.
M. MERY. Then is't mine own pigsney, and blessing on my heart.
R. ROISTER. This is our best friend, man.
M. MERY. Then teach her what to say.
M. MUMBLE. I am taught already.
M. MERY. Then go, make no delay.
R. ROISTER. Yet hark, one word in thine ear.
M. MERY. Back, sirs, from his tail.
R. ROISTER. Back, villains, will ye be privy of my counsel?
M. MERY. Back, sirs, so: I told you afore ye would be shent.
R. ROISTER. She shall have the first day a whole peck of argent.
M. MUMBLE. A peck! *Nomine Patris*, have ye so much spare?
R. ROISTER. Yea, and a cart-load thereto, or else were it bare,
Besides other moveables, household stuff, and land.
M. MUMBLE. Have ye lands too?

R. Roister. An hundred marks.
M. Mery. Yea, a thousand.
M. Mumble. And have ye cattle too? and sheep too?
R. Roister. Yea, a few.
M. Mery. He is ashamed the number of them to shew.
E'en round about him, as many thousand sheep goes,
As he and thou, and I too, have fingers and toes.
M. Mumble. And how many years old be you?
R. Roister. Forty at least.
M. Mery. Yea, and thrice forty to them.
R. Roister. Nay, now thou dost jest.
I am not so old; thou misreckonest my years.
M. Mery. I know that; but my mind was on bullocks and steers.
M. Mumble. And what shall I show her your mastership's name is?
R. Roister. Nay, she shall make suit ere she know that, i-wis.
M. Mumble. Yet let me somewhat know.
M. Mery. This is he, understand,
That killed the Blue Spider in Blanchepowder land.
M. Mumble. Yea, Jesus, William zee law, did he zo, law!
M. Mery. Yea, and the last elephant that ever he saw,
As the beast passed by, he start out of a busk,
And e'en with pure strength of arms plucked out his great tusk.
M. Mumble. Jesus, *nomine Patris*, what a thing was that!
R. Roister. Yea, but, Merygreeke, one thing thou hast forgot.
M. Mery. What?
R. Roister. Of th' other elephant.
M. Mery. Oh, him that fled away.
R. Roister. Yea.
M. Mery. Yea, he knew that his match was in place that day.
Tut, he bet the King of Crickets on Christmas day,
That he crept in a hole, and not a word to say.
M. Mumble. A sore man, by zembletee.
M. Mery. Why, he wrung a club
Once in a fray out of the hand of Belzebub.
R. Roister. And how when Mumfision —?
M. Mery. Oh, your custreling
Bore the lantern a-field so before the gosling —
Nay, that is too long a matter now to be told.
Never ask his name, nurse, I warrant thee, be bold.
He conquered in one day from Rome to Naples,
And won towns, nurse, as fast as thou canst make apples.
M. Mumble. O Lord, my heart quaketh for fear: he is too sore.
R. Roister. Thou makest her too much afeard, Merygreeke, no more.
This tale would fear my sweetheart Custance right evil.
M. Mery. Nay, let her take him, nurse, and fear not the devil.
But thus is our song dashed. Sirs, ye may home again.
R. Roister. No, shall they not. I charge you all here to remain —
The villain slaves, a whole day ere they can be found.
M. Mery. Couch on your marybones, whoresons, down to the ground.
Was it meet he should tarry so long in one place
Without harmony of music, or some solace?
Whoso hath such bees as your master in his head
Had need to have his spirits with music to be fed.
By your mastership's licence —
R. Roister. What is that? a mote?
M. Mery. No, it was a fowl's feather had light on your coat.
R. Roister. I was nigh no feathers since I came from my bed.
M. Mery. No, sir, it was a hair that was fall from your head.
R. Roister. My men come when it please them.
M. Mery. By your leave —
R. Roister. What is that?
M. Mery. Your gown was foul spotted with the foot of a gnat.

R. Roister. Their master to offend they are nothing afeard —
What now?
M. Mery. A lousy hair from your mastership's beard.
Omnes Famulæ. And sir, for nurse's sake, pardon this one offence.
We shall not after this show the like negligence.
R. Roister. I pardon you this once, and come, sing ne'er the worse.
M. Mery. How like you the goodness of this gentleman, nurse?
M. Mumble. God save his mastership that so can his men forgive!
And I will hear them sing ere I go, by his leave.
R. Roister. Marry, and thou shalt, wench. Come, we two will dance!
M. Mumble. Nay, I will by mine own self foot the song, perchance.
R. Roister. Go to it, sirs, lustily.
M. Mumble. Pipe up a merry note,
Let me hear it played, I will foot it for a groat. (*Cantent*)

The Second Song

Whoso to marry a minion wife,
Hath had good chance and hap,
Must love her and cherish her all his life,
And dandle her in his lap.

If she will fare well, if she will go gay,
A good husband ever still,
Whatever she lust to do, or to say,
Must let her have her own will.

About what affairs soever he go,
He must show her all his mind.
None of his counsel she may be kept fro,
Else is he a man unkind.

R. Roister. Now, nurse, take this same letter here to thy mistress,
And as my trust is in thee, ply my business.
M. Mumble. It shall be done.
M. Mery. Who made it?
R. Roister. I wrote it each whit.
M. Mery. Then needs it no mending.
R. Roister. No, no.
M. Mery. No, I know your wit.
I warrant it well.
M. Mumble. It shall be delivered.
But, if ye speed, shall I be considered?
M. Mery. Whough! dost thou doubt of that?
Madge. What shall I have?
M. Mery. An hundred times more than thou canst devise to crave.
M. Mumble. Shall I have some new gear? — for my old is all spent.
M. Mery. The worst kitchen wench shall go in ladies' raiment.
M. Mumble. Yea?
M. Mery. And the worst drudge in the house shall go better
Than your mistress doth now.
Mar. Then I trudge with your letter.
R. Roister. Now, may I repose me — Custance is mine own.
Let us sing and play homeward that it may be known.
M. Mery. But are you sure that your letter is well enough?
R. Roister. I wrote it myself.
M. Mery. Then sing we to dinner.
(*Here they sing, and go out singing.*)

ACTUS I, SCÆNA V

Christian Custance. Margerie Mumblecrust.

C. Custance. Who took thee this letter, Margerie Mumblecrust?
M. Mumble. A lusty gay bachelor took it me of trust,
And if ye seek to him he will love your doing.
C. Custance. Yea, but where learned he that manner of wooing?
M. Mumble. If to sue to him, you will any pains take,
He will have you to his wife, he saith, for my sake.
C. Custance. Some wise gentleman, belike. I am bespoken;
And I thought verily this had been some token
From my dear spouse, Gawin Goodluck, whom when him please,
God luckily send home to both our hearts' ease.
M. Mumble. A joyly man it is, I wot well by report,
And would have you to him for marriage resort.

Best open the writing, and see what it doth speak.
C. Custance. At this time, nurse, I will neither read ne break.
M. Mumble. He promised to give you a whole peck of gold.
C. Custance. Perchance, lack of a pint when it shall be all told.
M. Mumble. I would take a gay rich husband, and I were you.
C. Custance. In good sooth, Madge, e'en so would I, if I were thou.
But no more of this fond talk now — let us go in,
And see thou no more move me folly to begin.
Nor bring me no more letters for no man's pleasure,
But thou know from whom.
M. Mumble. I warrant ye shall be sure.

ACTUS II, SCÆNA I

Dobinet Doughtie.

D. Dough. Where is the house I go to, before or behind?
I know not where nor when nor how I shall it find.
If I had ten men's bodies and legs and strength,
This trotting that I have must needs lame me at length.
And now that my master is new set on wooing,
I trust there shall none of us find lack of doing.
Two pair of shoes a day will now be too little
To serve me, I must trot to and fro so mickle.
"Go bear me this token," "carry me this letter,"
Now this is the best way, now that way is better.
Up before day, sirs, I charge you, an hour or twain,
Trudge, "do me this message, and bring word quick again."
If one miss but a minute, then, "His arms and wounds,
I would not have slacked for ten thousand pounds!
Nay, see, I beseech you, if my most trusty page
Go not now about to hinder my marriage!"
So fervent hot wooing, and so far from wiving,
I trow, never was any creature living.
With every woman is he in some love's pang,
Then up to our lute at midnight, twangledom twang,
Then twang with our sonnets, and twang with our dumps,
And heigho from our heart, as heavy as lead lumps;
Then to our recorder with toodleloodle poop,
As the howlet out of an ivy bush should hoop.
Anon to our gittern, thrumpledum, thrumpledum thrum,
Thrumpledum, thrumpledum, thrumpledum, thrumpledum, thrum.
Of songs and ballads also he is a maker,
And that can he as finely do as Jack Raker;
Yea, and extempore will he ditties compose,
Foolish Marsyas ne'er made the like, I suppose,
Yet must we sing them, as good stuff I undertake,
As for such a pen-man is well fitting to make.
"Ah, for these long nights! heigho! when will it be day?
I fear ere I come she will be wooed away."
Then when answer is made that it may not be,
"O death, why comest thou not by and by?" saith he.
But then, from his heart to put away sorrow,
He is as far in with some new love next morrow.
But in the mean season we trudge and we trot.
From dayspring to midnight I sit not, nor rest not.
And now am I sent to dame Christian Custance,
But I fear it will end with a mock for pastance.
I bring her a ring, with a token in a clout,

And by all guess this same is her house out of doubt.
I know it now perfect, I am in my right way.
And, lo! yond the old nurse that was with us last day.

ACTUS II, SCÆNA II

MADGE MUMBLECRUST. DOBINET DOUGHTIE.

M. MUMBLE. I was ne'er so shoke up afore, since I was born.
That our mistress could not have chid, I would have sworn —
And I pray God I die, if I meant any harm,
But for my life-time this shall be to me a charm.
D. DOUGH. God you save and see, nurse, and how is it with you?
M. MUMBLE. Marry, a great deal the worse it is for such as thou.
D. DOUGH. For me? Why so?
M. MUMBLE. Why, were not thou one of them, say,
That sang and played here with the gentleman last day?
D. DOUGH. Yes, and he would know if you have for him spoken,
And prays you to deliver this ring and token.
M. MUMBLE. Now by the token that God tokened, brother.
I will deliver no token, one nor other.
I have once been so shent for your master's pleasure,
As I will not be again for all his treasure.
D. DOUGH. He will thank you, woman.
M. MUMBLE. I will none of his thank. (*Ex.*)
D. DOUGH. I ween I am a prophet, this gear will prove blank:
But what, should I home again without answer go?
It were better go to Rome on my head than so.
I will tarry here this month, but some of the house
Shall take it of me, and then I care not a louse.
But yonder cometh forth a wench or a lad,
If he have not one Lombard's touch, my luck is bad.

ACTUS II, SCÆNA III

TRUPENIE. D. DOUGHTIE. TIBET TALKAPACE. ANNOT ALYFACE.

TRUPENIE. I am clean lost for lack of merry company,
We 'gree not half well within, our wenches and I:
They will command like mistresses, they will forbid,
If they be not served, Trupenie must be chid.
Let them be as merry now as ye can desire,
With turning of a hand, our mirth lieth in the mire.
I cannot skill of such changeable mettle,
There is nothing with them but "in dock out nettle."
D. DOUGH. Whether is it better that I speak to him first,
Or he first to me? — It is good to cast the worst.
If I begin first, he will smell all my purpose,
Otherwise I shall not need anything to disclose.
TRUPENIE. What boy have we yonder? I will see what he is.
D. DOUGH. He cometh to me. It is hereabout, i-wis.
TRUPENIE. Wouldest thou ought, friend, that thou lookest so about?
D. DOUGH. Yea, but whether ye can help me or no, I doubt.
I seek to one mistress Custance house here dwelling.
TRUPENIE. It is my mistress ye seek to, by your telling.
D. DOUGH. Is there any of that name here but she?
TRUPENIE. Not one in all the whole town that I know, pardee.
D. DOUGH. A widow she is, I trow.
TRUPENIE. And what and she be?
D. DOUGH. But ensured to an husband.
TRUPENIE. Yea, so think we.
D. DOUGH. And I dwell with her husband that trusteth to be.

Trupenie. In faith, then must thou needs be welcome to me —
Let us for acquaintance shake hands togither,
And whate'er thou be, heartily welcome hither.

[*Enter* Tibet *and* Annot]

Tib. Talk. Well, Trupenie, never but flinging?
An. Alyface. And frisking?
Trupenie. Well, Tibet and Annot, still swinging and whisking?
Tib. Talk. But ye roil abroad —
An. Alyface. In the street everywhere.
Trupenie. Where are ye twain — in chambers — when ye meet me there?
But come hither, fools, I have one now by the hand,
Servant to him that must be our mistress' husband,
Bid him welcome.
An. Alyface. To me truly is he welcome.
Tib. Talk. Forsooth, and as I may say, heartily welcome.
D. Dough. I thank you, mistress maids.
An. Alyface. I hope we shall better know.
Tib. Talk. And when will our new master come?
D. Dough. Shortly, I trow.
Tib. Talk. I would it were to-morrow: for till he resort,
Our mistress, being a widow, hath small comfort;
And I heard our nurse speak of an husband to-day
Ready for our mistress, a rich man and a gay.
And we shall go in our French hoods every day,
In our silk cassocks (I warrant you) fresh and gay,
In our trick ferdegews and biliments of gold;
Brave in our suits of change, seven double fold
Then shall ye see Tibet, sirs, tread the moss so trim —
Nay, why said I "tread"? — ye shall see her glide and swim,
Not lumperdee, clumperdee, like our spaniel Rig.
Trupenie. Marry, then, prick-me-dainty, come toast me a fig!
Who shall then know our Tib Talkapace, trow ye?
An. Alyface. And why not Annot Alyface as fine as she?
Trupenie. And what had Tom Trupenie, a father or none?
An. Alyface. Then our pretty new-come man will look to be one.
Trupenie. We four, I trust, shall be a joyly merry knot.
Shall we sing a fit to welcome our friend, Annot?
An. Alyface. Perchance he cannot sing.
D. Dough. I am at all assays.
Tib. Talk. By Cock, and the better welcome to us always.
(*Here they sing.*)

A thing very fit
For them that have wit,
And are fellows knit
Servants in one house to be,
Is fast for to sit,
And not oft to flit,
Nor vary a whit,
But lovingly to agree.

No man complaining,
No other disdaining,
For loss or for gaining,
But fellows or friends to be.
No grudge remaining,
No work refraining,
Nor help restraining,
But lovingly to agree.

No man for despite,
By word or by write
His fellow to twite,
But further in honesty,
No good turns entwite,
Nor old sores recite,
But let all go quite,
And lovingly to agree.

After drudgery,
When they be weary,
Then to be merry,
To laugh and sing, they be free —

With chip and cherry,
Heigh derry derry,
Trill on the berry —
And lovingly to agree.

Finis.

Tib. Talk. Will you now in with us unto our mistress go?
D. Dough. I have first for my master an errand or two.
But I have here from him a token and a ring,
They shall have most thank of her that first doth it bring.
Tib. Talk. Marry, that will I!
Trupenie. See and Tibet snatch not now.
Tib. Talk. And why may not I, sir, get thanks as well as you? (*Exeat.*)
An. Alyface. Yet get ye not all, we will go with you both,
And have part of your thanks, be ye never so loth. (*Exeant omnes.*)
D. Dough. So my hands are rid of it, I care for no more.
I may now return home, so durst I not afore. (*Exeat.*)

ACTUS II, SCÆNA IV

C. Custance. Tibet. Annot Alyface. Trupenie.

C. Custance. Nay, come forth all three; and come hither, pretty maid.
Will not so many forewarnings make you afraid?
Tib. Talk. Yes, forsooth.
C. Custance. But still be a runner up and down,
Still be a bringer of tidings and tokens to town.
Tib. Talk. No, forsooth, mistress.
C. Custance. Is all your delight and joy
In whisking and ramping abroad like a tomboy?
Tib. Talk. Forsooth, these were there too, Annot and Trupenie.
Trupenie. Yea, but ye alone took it, ye cannot deny.
An. Alyface. Yea, that ye did.
Tibet. But if I had not, ye twain would.
C. Custance. You great calf, ye should have more wit, so ye should;
But why should any of you take such things in hand?
Tibet. Because it came from him that must be your husband.
C. Custance. How do ye know that?
Tibet. Forsooth, the boy did say so.
C. Custance. What was his name?
An. Alyface. We asked not.
C. Custance. No?
An. Alyface. He is not far gone, of likelihood.
Trupenie. I will see.
C. Custance. If thou canst find him in the street, bring him to me.
Trupenie. Yes. (*Exeat.*)
C. Custance. Well, ye naughty girls, if ever I perceive
That henceforth you do letters or tokens receive,
To bring unto me from any person or place,
Except ye first show me the party face to face,
Either thou or thou, full truly abye thou shalt.
Tibet. Pardon this, and the next time powder me in salt.
C. Custance. I shall make all girls by you twain to beware.
Tibet. If ever I offend again, do not me spare!
But if ever I see that false boy any more
By your mistresship's licence, I tell you afore,
I will rather have my coat twenty times swinged,
Than on the naughty wag not to be avenged.
C. Custance. Good wenches would not so ramp abroad idly,
But keep within doors, and ply their work earnestly.
If one would speak with me that is a man likely,
Ye shall have right good thank to bring me word quickly.
But otherwise with messages to come in post

From henceforth, I promise you, shall be to your cost.
Get you in to your work.
TIBET. Yes, forsooth.
C. CUSTANCE. Hence, both twain.
And let me see you play me such a part again.

[*Re-enter* TRUPENIE.]

TRUPENIE. Mistress, I have run past the far end of the street,
Yet can I not yonder crafty boy see nor meet.
C. CUSTANCE. No?
TRUPENIE. Yet I looked as far beyond the people,
As one may see out of the top of Paul's steeple.
C. CUSTANCE. Hence, in at doors, and let me no more be vexed.
TRUPENIE. Forgive me this one fault, and lay on for the next. (*Exeat.*)
C. CUSTANCE. Now will I in too, for I think, so God me mend,
This will prove some foolish matter in the end. (*Exeat*)

ACTUS III, SCÆNA I

MATHEW MERYGREEKE.

M. MERY. Now say this again — he hath somewhat to doing
Which followeth the trace of one that is wooing,
Specially that hath no more wit in his head,
Than my cousin Roister Doister withal is led.
I am sent in all haste to espy and to mark
How our letters and tokens are likely to wark.
Master Roister Doister must have answer in haste,
For he loveth not to spend much labour in waste.
Now as for Christian Custance, by this light,
Though she had not her troth to Gawin Goodluck plight,
Yet rather than with such a loutish dolt to marry,
I daresay would live a poor life solitary.
But fain would I speak with Custance, if I wist how,
To laugh at the matter — yond cometh one forth now.

ACTUS III, SCÆNA II

TIBET. M. MERYGREEKE. CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE.

TIB. TALK. Ah, that I might but once in my life have a sight
Of him that made us all so ill shent — by this light,
He should never escape if I had him by the ear,
But even from his head I would it bite or tear!
Yea, and if one of them were not enow,
I would bite them both off, I make God avow!
M. MERY. What is he, whom this little mouse doth so threaten?
TIB. TALK. I would teach him, I trow, to make girls shent or beaten!
M. MERY. I will call her. Maid, with whom are ye so hasty?
TIB. TALK. Not with you, sir, but with a little wagpasty,
A deceiver of folks by subtle craft and guile.
M. MERY. I know where she is — Dobinet hath wrought some wile.
TIB. TALK. He brought a ring and token which he said was sent
From our dame's husband, but I wot well I was shent —
For it liked her as well, to tell you no lies,
As water in her ship, or salt cast in her eyes;
And yet whence it came neither we nor she can tell.
M. MERY. We shall have sport anon — I like this very well!
And dwell ye here with Mistress Custance, fair maid?
TIB. TALK. Yea, marry do I, sir — what would ye have said?
M. MERY. A little message unto her by word of mouth.
TIB. TALK. No messages, by your leave, nor tokens forsooth.
M. MERY. Then help me to speak with her.

Tib. Talk. With a good will that.
Here she cometh forth. Now speak ye know best what.
C. Custance. None other life with you, maid, but abroad to skip?
Tib. Talk. Forsooth, here is one would speak with your mistress-ship.
C. Custance. Ah, have ye been learning of mo messages now?
Tib. Talk. I would not hear his mind, but bade him show it to you.
C. Custance. In at doors.
Tib. Talk. I am gone. (*Ex.*)
M. Mery. Dame Custance, God ye save.
C. Custance. Welcome, friend Merygreeke — and what thing would ye have?
M. Mery. I am come to you a little matter to break.
C. Custance. But see it be honest, else better not to speak.
M. Mery. How feel ye yourself affected here of late?
C. Custance. I feel no manner change but after the old rate.
But whereby do ye mean?
M. Mery. Concerning marriage.
Doth not love lade you?
C. Custance. I feel no such carriage.
M. Mery. Do ye feel no pangs of dotage? answer me right.
C. Custance. I dote so, that I make but one sleep all the night.
But what need all these words?
M. Mery. Oh, Jesus, will ye see
What dissembling creatures these same women be?
The gentleman ye wot of, whom ye do so love
That ye would fain marry him, if ye durst it move,
"Among other rich widows, which are of him glad,"
Lest ye, for lesing of him, perchance might run mad,
Is now contented that, upon your suit-making,
Ye be as one in election of taking.
C. Custance. What a tale is this? "that I wote of?" "whom I love?"
M. Mery. Yea, and he is as loving a worm, again, as a dove.
E'en of very pity he is willing you to take,
Because ye shall not destroy yourself for his sake.
C. Custance. Marry, God yield his maship whatever he be.
It is gentmanly spoken.
M. Mery. Is it not, trow ye?
If ye have the grace now to offer yourself, ye speed.
C. Custance. As much as though I did — this time it shall not need.
But what gentman is it, I pray you tell me plain,
That wooeth so finely?
M. Mery. Lo, where ye be again,
As though ye knew him not.
C. Custance. Tush, ye speak in jest.
M. Mery. Nay sure, the party is in good knacking earnest,
And have you he will, he saith, and have you he must.
C. Custance. I am promised during my life; that is just.
M. Mery. Marry so thinketh he, unto him alone.
C. Custance. No creature hath my faith and troth but one,
That is Gawyn Goodluck, and, if it be not he,
He hath no title this way whatever he be,
Nor I know none to whom I have such word spoken.
M. Mery. Ye know him not, you, by his letter and token?
C. Custance. Indeed true it is, that a letter I have,
But I never read it yet, as God me save.
M. Mery. Ye a woman, and your letter so long unread?
C. Custance. Ye may thereby know what haste I have to wed.
But now who it is, for my hand I know by guess.
M. Mery. Ah, well I say!
C. Custance. It is Roister Doister, doubtless.
M. Mery. Will ye never leave this dissimulation?

Ye know him not?
C. CUSTANCE. But by imagination,
For no man there is but a very dolt and lout
That to woo a widow would so go about.
He shall never have me his wife while he do live.
M. MERY. Then will he have you if he may, so mote I thrive,
And he biddeth you send him word by me,
That ye humbly beseech him, ye may his wife be,
And that there shall be no let in you nor mistrust,
But to be wedded on Sunday next if he lust,
And biddeth you to look for him.
C. CUSTANCE. Doth he bid so?
M. MERY. When he cometh, ask him whether he did or no.
C. CUSTANCE. Go say that I bid him keep him warm at home,
For if he come abroad, he shall cough me a mome;
My mind was vexed, I shrew his head, sottish dolt!
M. MERY. He hath in his head —
C. CUSTANCE. As much brain as a burbolt.
M. MERY. Well, dame Custance, if he hear you thus play chopploge —
C. CUSTANCE. What will he?
M. MERY. Play the devil in the horologe.
C. CUSTANCE. I defy him, lout.
M. MERY. Shall I tell him what ye say?
C. CUSTANCE. Yea, and add whatsoever thou canst, I thee pray.
And I will avouch it, whatsoever it be.
M. MERY. Then let me alone — we will laugh well, ye shall see,
It will not be long ere he will hither resort.
C. CUSTANCE. Let him come when him lust, I wish no better sport.
Fare ye well, I will in, and read my great letter.
I shall to my wooer make answer the better. (*Exeat.*)

ACTUS III, SCÆNA III

MATHEW MERYGREEKE. ROISTER DOISTER.

M. MERY. Now that the whole answer in my device doth rest,
I shall paint out our wooer in colours of the best,
And all that I say shall be on Custance's mouth;
She is author of all that I shall speak forsooth.
But yond cometh Roister Doister now in a trance.
R. ROISTER. Juno send me this day good luck and good chance!
I cannot but come see how Merygreeke doth speed.
M. MERY. I will not see him, but give him a jut indeed.
I cry your mastership mercy.
R. ROISTER. And whither now?
M. MERY. As fast as I could run, sir, in post against you.
But why speak ye so faintly, or why are ye so sad?
R. ROISTER. Thou knowest the proverb — because I cannot be had.
Hast thou spoken with this woman?
M. MERY. Yea, that I have.
R. ROISTER. And what will this gear be?
M. MERY. No, so God me save.
R. ROISTER. Hast thou a flat answer?
M. MERY. Nay, a sharp answer.
R. ROISTER. What?
M. MERY. Ye shall not, she saith, by her will marry her cat.
Ye are such a calf, such an ass, such a block,
Such a lilburn, such a hoball, such a lobcock,
And because ye should come to her at no season,
She despised your maship out of all reason.
"Bawawe what ye say," ko I, "of such a gentman."
"Nay, I fear him not," ko she, "do the best he can.
He vaunteth himself for a man of prowess great,

Whereas a good gander, I daresay, may him beat.
And where he is louted and laughed to scorn,
For the veriest dolt that ever was born,
And veriest lover, sloven and beast,
Living in this world from the west to the east:
Yet of himself hath he such opinion,
That in all the world is not the like minion.
He thinketh each woman to be brought in dotage
With the only sight of his goodly personage.
Yet none that will have him — we do him lout and flock,
And make him among us our common sporting stock,
And so would I now," ko she, "save only because."
"Better nay," ko I, "I lust not meddle with daws.
Ye are happy," ko I, "that ye are a woman.
This would cost you your life in case ye were a man."
R. Roister. Yea, an hundred thousand pound should not save her life!
M. Mery. No, but that ye woo her to have her to your wife —
But I could not stop her mouth.
R. Roister. Heigh ho, alas!
M. Mery. Be of good cheer, man, and let the world pass.
R. Roister. What shall I do or say now that it will not be?
M. Mery. Ye shall have choice of a thousand as good as she,
And ye must pardon her; it is for lack of wit.
R. Roister. Yea, for were not I an husband for her fit?
Well, what should I now do?
M. Mery. In faith I cannot tell.
R. Roister. I will go home and die.
M. Mery. Then shall I bid toll the bell?
R. Roister. No.
M. Mery. God have mercy on your soul, ah, good gentleman,
That e'er ye should th[u]s die for an unkind woman.
Will ye drink once ere ye go?
R. Roister. No, no, I will none.
M. Mery. How feel your soul to God?
R. Roister. I am nigh gone.
M. Mery. And shall we hence straight?
R. Roister. Yea.
M. Mery. *Placebo dilexi.*[1]
(*ut infra.*)
Master Roister Doister will straight go home and die.
R. Roister. Heigh-ho! Alas, the pangs of death my heart do break!
M. Mery. Hold your peace for shame, sir, a dead man may not speak!
Nequando. — What mourners and what torches shall we have?
R. Roister. None.
M. Mery. *Dirige.* He will go darkling to his grave,
Neque lux, neque crux, neque mourners, *neque* clink,
He will steal to heaven, unknowing to God, I think,
A porta inferi. Who shall your goods possess?
R. Roister. Thou shalt be my sectour, and have all more and less.
M. Mery. *Requiem æternam.* — Now, God reward your mastership.
And I will cry halfpenny-dole for your worship.

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[1] *Placebo dilexi,*
Master Roister Doister will straight go home and die,
Our Lord Jesus Christ his soul have mercy upon!
Thus you see to-day a man, to-morrow John.
Yet saving for a woman's extreme cruelty,
He might have lived yet a month or two or three,
But in spite of Custance which hath him wearied,
His maship shall be worshipfully buried.
And while some piece of his soul is yet him within,
Some part of his funerals let us here begin.
Dirige. He will go darkling to his grave.
Neque lux, neque crux, nisi solum clink,
Never gentman so went toward heaven, I think.

Yet, sirs, as ye will the bliss of heaven win,
When he cometh to the grave lay him softly in,
And all men take heed by this one gentleman,
How you set your love upon an unkind woman:
For these women be all such mad peevish elves,
They will not be won except it please themselves.
But in faith, Custance, if ever ye come in hell,
Master Roister Doister shall serve you as well.
Good night, Roger old knave; farewell, Roger old knave.
Good night, Roger old knave, knave, knap.
Nequando. Audivi vocem. Requiem æternam.

Come forth, sirs, hear the doleful news I shall you tell. (*Evocat servos militis.*)
Our good master here will no longer with us dwell,
But in spite of Custance, which hath him wearied,
Let us see his maship solemnly buried.
And while some piece of his soul is yet him within,
Some part of his funerals let us here begin.
Audivi vocem. All men take heede by this one gentleman,
How you set your love upon an unkind woman.
For these women be all such mad peevish elves,
They will not be won except it please themselves.
But in faith, Custance, if ever ye come in hell,
Master Roister Doister shall serve you as well!
And will ye needs go from us thus in very deed?
R. Roister. Yea, in good sadness.
M. Mery. Now, Jesus Christ be your speed.
Good-night, Roger, old knave! farewell, Roger, old knave!
Good-night, Roger, old knave! knave, knap! (*ut infra.*)
Pray for the late master Roister Doister's soul,
And come forth, parish clerk, let the passing bell toll. (*Ad servos militis.*)
Pray for your master, sirs, and for him ring a peal.[1]
He was your right good master while he was in heal.
Qui Lazarum.
R. Roister. Heigh-ho!
M. Mery. Dead men go not so fast
In Paradisum.
R. Roister. Heigh-ho!
M. Mery. Soft, hear what I have cast.
R. Roister. I will hear nothing, I am past.
M. Mery. Whough, wellaway!
Ye may tarry one hour, and hear what I shall say,
Ye were best, sir, for a while to revive again,
And quite them ere ye go.
R. Roister. Trowest thou so?
M. Mery. Yea, plain!
R. Roister. How may I revive, being now so far past?
M. Mery. I will rub your temples, and fet you again at last.
R. Roister. It will not be possible.
M. Mery. Yes, for twenty pound.
R. Roister. Arms, what dost thou?
M. Mery. Fet you again out of your sound.
By this cross ye were nigh gone indeed, I might feel
Your soul departing within an inch of your heel.
Now follow my counsel.
R. Roister. What is it?
M. Mery. If I were you,
Custance should eft seek to me, ere I would bow.
R. Roister. Well, as thou wilt have me, even so will I do.
M. Mery. Then shall ye revive again for an hour or two.
R. Roister. As thou wilt, I am content for a little space.
M. Mery. "Good hap is not hasty, yet in space cometh grace."
To speak with Custance yourself should be very well,
What good thereof may come, nor I nor you can tell.
But now the matter standeth upon your marriage,
Ye must now take unto you a lusty courage.
Ye may not speak with a faint heart to Custance,
But with a lusty breast and countenance,
That she may know she hath to answer to a man.
R. Roister. Yes, I can do that as well as any can.
M. Mery. Then because ye must Custance face to face woo,

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[1] *The first Bell a Triple.* When died he? When died he?
The second. We have him, we have him.
The third. Roister Doister, Roister Doister.
The fourth Bell. He cometh, he cometh.
The great Bell. Our own, our own.

Let us see how to behave yourself ye can do.
Ye must have a portly brag after your estate.
R. Roister. Tush, I can handle that after the best rate.
M. Mery. Well done! so lo, up man with your head and chin,
Up with that snout, man! So, lo, now ye begin! —
So, that is something like — but, pranky cote, neigh whan!
That is a lusty brute — hands under your side, man!
So, lo, now is it even as it should be —
That is somewhat like, for a man of your degree.
Then must ye stately go, jetting up and down.
Tut, can ye no better shake the tail of your gown?
There, lo, such a lusty brag it is ye must make.
R. Roister. To come behind, and make curtsy, thou must some pains take.
M. Mery. Else were I much to blame, I thank your mastership.
The Lord one day all-to-begrime you with worship!
Back, Sir Sauce, let gentlefolks have elbow room,
Void, sirs, see ye not master Roister Doister come?
Make place, my masters.
R. Roister. Thou jostlest now too nigh.
M. Mery. Back, all rude louts!
R. Roister. Tush!
M. Mery. I cry your maship mercy.
Heyday — if fair fine mistress Custance saw you now,
Ralph Roister Doister were her own, I warrant you.
R. Roister. Ne'er an M. by your girdle?
M. Mery. Your Good Mastership's
Mastership were her own Mistress-ship's Mistress-ship!
Ye were take up for hawks, ye were gone, ye were gone!
But now one other thing more yet I think upon.
R. Roister. Show what it is.
M. Mery. A wooer, be he never so poor,
Must play and sing before his best-beloved's door,
How much more, then, you?
R. Roister. Thou speakest well, out of doubt.
M. Mery. And perchance that would make her the sooner come out.
R. Roister. Go call my musicians, bid them hie apace.
M. Mery. I will be here with them ere ye can say "Treyace." (*Exeat.*)
R. Roister. This was well said of Merygreeke, I 'low his wit.
Before my sweetheart's door we will have a fit,
That if my love come forth, that I may with her talk,
I doubt not but this gear shall on my side walk.
But, lo, how well Merygreeke is returned sence.

[*Re-enter* Merygreeke.]

M. Mery. There hath grown no grass on my heel since I went hence,
Lo, here have I brought that shall make you pastance.
R. Roister. Come, sirs, let us sing to win my dear love Custance.
(*Cantent.*)

The Fourth Song

I mun be married a Sunday,
I mun be married a Sunday,
Whosoever shall come that way,
I mun be married a Sunday.

Roister Doister is my name,
Roister Doister is my name,
A lusty brute I am the same,
I mun be married a Sunday.

Christian Custance have I found,
Christian Custance have I found,
A widow worth a thousand pound,
I mun be married a Sunday.

Custance is as sweet as honey,
Custance is as sweet as honey,
I her lamb and she my coney,
I mun be married a Sunday.

When we shall make our wedding feast,
When we shall make our wedding feast,
There shall be cheer for man and beast,
I mun be married a Sunday.
I mun be married a Sunday, etc.

M. Mery. Lo, where she cometh, some countenance to her make,
And ye shall hear me be plain with her for your sake.

ACTUS III, SCÆNA IV

Custance. Merygreeke. Roister Doister.

C. Custance. What gauding and fooling is this afore my door?

M. Mery. May not folks be honest, pray you, though they be poor?

C. Custance. As that thing may be true, so rich folks may be fools.

R. Roister. Her talk is as fine as she had learned in schools.

M. Mery. Look partly toward her, and draw a little near.

C. Custance. Get ye home, idle folks!

M. Mery. Why, may not we be here?
Nay, and ye will ha'ze, ha'ze — otherwise, I tell you plain,
And ye will not ha'ze, then give us our gear again.

C. Custance. Indeed I have of yours much gay things, God save all.

R. Roister. Speak gently unto her, and let her take all.

M. Mery. Ye are too tender-hearted: shall she make us daws?
Nay, dame, I will be plain with you in my friend's cause.

R. Roister. Let all this pass, sweetheart, and accept my service.

C. Custance. I will not be served with a fool in no wise.
When I choose an husband I hope to take a man.

M. Mery. And where will ye find one which can do that he can?
Now this man toward you being so kind,
You not to make him an answer somewhat to his mind!

C. Custance. I sent him a full answer by you, did I not?

M. Mery. And I reported it.

C. Custance. Nay, I must speak it again.

R. Roister. No, no, he told it all.

M. Mery. Was I not meetly plain?

R. Roister. Yes.

M. Mery. But I would not tell all; for faith, if I had,
With you, dame Custance, ere this hour it had been bad,
And not without cause — for this goodly personage
Meant no less than to join with you in marriage.

C. Custance. Let him waste no more labour nor suit about me.

M. Mery. Ye know not where your preferment lieth, I see,
He sending you such a token, ring and letter.

C. Custance. Marry, here it is — ye never saw a better.

M. Mery. Let us see your letter.

C. Custance. Hold, read it if ye can,
And see what letter it is to win a woman.

M. Mery. "To mine own dear coney-bird, sweetheart, and pigsney,
Good Mistress Custance, present these by and by."
Of this superscription do ye blame the style?

C. Custance. With the rest as good stuff as ye read a great while.

M. Mery. "Sweet mistress, where as I love you nothing at all —
Regarding your substance and richesse chief of all —
For your personage, beauty, demeanour and wit,
I commend me unto you never a whit. —
Sorry to hear report of your good welfare,
For (as I hear say) such your conditions are,
That ye be worthy favour of no living man,
To be abhorred of every honest man,
To be taken for a woman inclined to vice,
Nothing at all to virtue giving her due price. —

Wherefore, concerning marriage, ye are thought
Such a fine paragon, as ne'er honest man bought. —
And now by these presents I do you advertise
That I am minded to marry you in no wise. —
For your goods and substance, I could be content
To take you as ye are. If ye mind to be my wife,
Ye shall be assured, for the time of my life,
I will keep you right well from good raiment and fare —
Ye shall not be kept but in sorrow and care —
Ye shall in no wise live at your own liberty.
Do and say what ye lust, ye shall never please me;
But when ye are merry, I will be all sad;
When ye are sorry, I will be very glad;
When ye seek your heart's ease, I will be unkind;
At no time in me shall ye much gentleness find,
But all things contrary to your will and mind,
Shall be done — otherwise I will not be behind
To speak. And as for all them that would do you wrong,
I will so help and maintain, ye shall not live long —
Nor any foolish dolt shall cumber you but I.
I, whoe'er say nay, will stick by you till I die.
Thus, good mistress Custance, the Lord you save and keep;
From me, Roister Doister, whether I wake or sleep —
Who favoureth you no less, ye may be bold,
Than this letter purporteth, which ye have unfold."

C. Custance. How by this letter of love? is it not fine?

R. Roister. By the arms of Caleys, it is none of mine.

M. Mery. Fie, you are foul to blame, this is your own hand!

C. Custance. Might not a woman be proud of such an husband?

M. Mery. Ah, that ye would in a letter show such despite!

R. Roister. Oh, I would I had him here, the which did it endite!

M. Mery. Why, ye made it yourself, ye told me, by this light.

R. Roister. Yea, I meant I wrote it mine own self yesternight.

C. Custance. I-wis, sir, I would not have sent you such a mock.

R. Roister. Ye may so take it, but I meant it not so, by Cock.

M. Mery. Who can blame this woman to fume and fret and rage?
Tut, tut! yourself now have marred your own marriage.
Well, yet mistress Custance, if ye can this remit,
This gentleman otherwise may your love requit.

C. Custance. No, God be with you both, and seek no more to me. (*Exeat.*)

R. Roister. Wough! she is gone for ever, I shall her no more see.

M. Mery. What, weep? Fie, for shame! And blubber? For manhood's sake,
Never let your foe so much pleasure of you take.
Rather play the man's part, and do love refrain.
If she despise you, e'en despise ye her again.

R. Roister. By Goss, and for thy sake I defy her indeed.

M. Mery. Yea, and perchance that way ye shall much sooner speed,
For one mad property these women have in fey,
When ye will, they will not, will not ye, then will they.
Ah, foolish woman! ah, most unlucky Custance!
Ah, unfortunate woman! ah, peevish Custance!
Art thou to thine harms so obstinately bent,
That thou canst not see where lieth thine high preferment?

Canst thou not lub dis man, which could lub dee so well?
Art thou so much thine own foe?
R. Roister. Thou dost the truth tell.
M. Mery. Well I lament.
R. Roister. So do I.
M. Mery. Wherefore?
R. Roister. For this thing.
Because she is gone.
M. Mery. I mourn for another thing.
R. Roister. What is it, Merygreeke, wherefore thou dost grief take?
M. Mery. That I am not a woman myself for your sake,
I would have you myself, and a straw for yond gill,
And mock much of you, though it were against my will.
I would not, I warrant you, fall in such a rage,
As so to refuse such a goodly personage.
R. Roister. In faith, I heartily thank thee, Merygreeke.
M. Mery. And I were a woman —
R. Roister. Thou wouldest to me seek.
M. Mery. For, though I say it, a goodly person ye be.
R. Roister. No, no.
M. Mery. Yes, a goodly man as e'er I did see.
R. Roister. No, I am a poor homely man, as God made me.
M. Mery. By the faith that I owe to God, sir, but ye be!
Would I might for your sake spend a thousand pound land.
R. Roister. I dare say thou wouldest have me to thy husband.
M. Mery. Yea, and I were the fairest lady in the shire,
And knew you as I know you, and see you now here —
Well, I say no more.
R. Roister. Gramercies, with all my heart!
M. Mery. But since that cannot be, will ye play a wise part?
R. Roister. How should I?
M. Mery. Refrain from Custance a while now,
And I warrant her soon right glad to seek to you.
Ye shall see her anon come on her knees creeping,
And pray you to be good to her, salt tears weeping.
R. Roister. But what and she come not?
M. Mery. In faith, then, farewell she.
Or else if ye be wroth, ye may avenged be.
R. Roister. By Cock's precious potstick, and e'en so I shall.
I will utterly destroy her, and house and all.
But I would be avenged in the mean space,
On that vile scribbler, that did my wooing disgrace.
M. Mery. "Scribbler," ko you, indeed he is worthy no less.
I will call him to you, and ye bid me doubtless.
R. Roister. Yes, for although he had as many lives,
As a thousand widows, and a thousand wives,
As a thousand lions, and a thousand rats,
A thousand wolves, and a thousand cats,
A thousand bulls, and a thousand calves,
And a thousand legions divided in halves,
He shall never 'scape death on my sword's point,
Though I should be torn therefore joint by joint.
M. Mery. Nay, if ye will kill him, I will not fet him,
I will not in so much extremity set him;
He may yet amend, sir, and be an honest man,
Therefore pardon him, good soul, as much as ye can.
R. Roister. Well, for thy sake, this once with his life he shall pass,
But I will hew him all to pieces, by the Mass.
M. Mery. Nay, faith, ye shall promise that he shall no harm have,
Else I will not fet him.
R. Roister. I shall, so God me save —

But I may chide him a-good.
M. Mery. Yea, that do, hardily.
R. Roister. Go, then.
M. Mery. I return, and bring him to you by and by. (*Ex.*)

ACTUS III, SCÆNA V

Roister Doister. Mathew Merygreeke. Scrivener.

R. Roister. What is a gentleman but his word and his promise?
I must now save this villain's life in any wise,
And yet at him already my hands do tickle,
I shall uneth hold them, they will be so fickle.
But, lo, and Merygreeke have not brought him sence.
M. Mery. Nay, I would I had of my purse paid forty pence.
Scrivener. So would I too; but it needed not, that stound.
M. Mery. But the gentman had rather spent five thousand pound,
For it disgraced him at least five times so much.
Scrivener. He disgraced himself, his loutishness is such.
R. Roister. How long they stand prating! Why comest thou not away?
M. Mery. Come now to himself, and hark what he will say.
Scrivener. I am not afraid in his presence to appear.
R. Roister. Art thou come, fellow?
Scrivener. How think you? Am I not here?
R. Roister. What hindrance hast thou done me, and what villainy?
Scrivener. It hath come of thyself, if thou hast had any.
R. Roister. All the stock thou comest of later or rather,
From thy first father's grandfather's father's father,
Nor all that shall come of thee to the world's end,
Though to threescore generations they descend,
Can be able to make me a just recompense,
For this trespass of thine and this one offence.
Scrivener. Wherein?
R. Roister. Did not you make me a letter, brother?
Scrivener. Pay the like hire, I will make you such another.
R. Roister. Nay, see and these whoreson Pharisees and Scribes
Do not get their living by polling and bribes.
If it were not for shame —
Scrivener. Nay, hold thy hands still.
M. Mery. Why, did ye not promise that ye would not him spill?
Scrivener. Let him not spare me.
R. Roister. Why wilt thou strike me again?
Scrivener. Ye shall have as good as ye bring of me, that is plain.
M. Mery. I cannot blame him, sir, though your blows would him grieve.
For he knoweth present death to ensue of all ye give.
R. Roister. Well, this man for once hath purchased thy pardon.
Scrivener. And what say ye to me? or else I will be gone.
R. Roister. I say the letter thou madest me was not good.
Scrivener. Then did ye wrong copy it, of likelihood.
R. Roister. Yes, out of thy copy word for word I wrote.
Scrivener. Then was it as ye prayed to have it, I wot,
But in reading and pointing there was made some fault.
R. Roister. I wot not, but it made all my matter to halt.
Scrivener. How say you, is this mine original or no?
R. Roister. The self same that I wrote out of, so mote I go!
Scrivener. Look you on your own fist, and I will look on this,
And let this man be judge whether I read amiss.
"To mine own dear coney-bird, sweetheart, and pigsney,

Good Mistress Custance, present these by and by."
How now? doth not this superscription agree?

R. **Roister.** Read that is within, and there ye shall the fault see.

Scrivener. "Sweet mistress, whereas I love you nothing at all
Regarding your richesse and substance — chief of all
For your personage, beauty, demeanour, and wit
I commend me unto you. — Never a whit
Sorry to hear report of your good welfare,
For (as I hear say) such your conditions are,
That ye be worthy favour; of no living man
To be abhorred; of every honest man
To be taken for a woman inclined to vice
Nothing at all; to virtue giving her due price. —
Wherefore concerning marriage, ye are thought
Such a fine paragon, as ne'er honest man bought. —
And now by these presents I do you advertise,
That I am minded to marry you — in no wise
For your goods and substance — I can be content
To take you as you are. If ye will be my wife,
Ye shall be assured for the time of my life,
I will keep you right well; from good raiment and fare,
Ye shall not be kept; but in sorrow and care
Ye shall in no wise live; at your own liberty,
Do and say what ye lust; ye shall never please me
But when ye are merry; I will be all sad
When ye are sorry; I will be very glad
When ye seek your heart's ease; I will be unkind
At no time; in me shall ye much gentleness find.
But all things contrary to your will and mind
Shall be done otherwise; I will not be behind
To speak. And as for all them that would do you wrong —
I will so help and maintain ye — shall not live long.
Nor any foolish dolt shall cumber you, but I,
I, whoe'er say nay, will stick by you till I die.
Thus, good mistress Custance, the Lord you save and keep. —
From me, Roister Doister, whether I wake or sleep,
Who favoureth you no less, ye may be bold,
Than this letter purporteth, which ye have unfold."
Now, sir, what default can ye find in this letter?

R. **Roister.** Of truth, in my mind there cannot be a better.

Scrivener. Then was the fault in reading, and not in writing,
No, nor I dare say in the form of enditing.
But who read this letter, that it sounded so naught?

M. **Mery.** I read it, indeed.

Scrivener. Ye read it not as ye ought.

R. **Roister.** Why, thou wretched villain, was all this same fault in thee?

M. **Mery.** I knock your costard if ye offer to strike me!

R. **Roister.** Strikest thou, indeed? and I offer but in jest?

M. **Mery.** Yea, and rap you again except ye can sit in rest —
And I will no longer tarry here, me believe!

R. **Roister.** What, wilt thou be angry, and I do thee forgive?
Fare thou well, scribbler, I cry thee mercy indeed.

Scrivener. Fare ye well, bibbler, and worthily may ye speed!

R. **Roister.** If it were another but thou, it were a knave.

M. **Mery.** Ye are another yourself, sir, the Lord us both save.
Albeit in this matter I must your pardon crave.

Alas, would ye wish in me the wit that ye have?
But as for my fault I can quickly amend,
I will show Custance it was I that did offend.
R. Roister. By so doing her anger may be reformed.
M. Mery. But if by no entreaty she will be turned,
Then set light by her and be as testy as she,
And do your force upon her with extremity.
R. Roister. Come on, therefore, let us go home in sadness.
M. Mery. That if force shall need all may be in a readiness —
And as for this letter, hardily, let all go.
We will know where she refuse you for that or no. (*Exeant am.*)

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA I

Sym Suresby.

Sym Sure. Is there any man but I, Sym Suresby, alone,
That would have taken such an enterprise him upon,
In such an outrageous tempest as this was,
Such a dangerous gulf of the sea to pass?
I think, verily, Neptune's mighty godship
Was angry with some that was in our ship,
And but for the honesty which in me he found,
I think for the others' sake we had been drowned.
But fie on that servant which for his master's wealth
Will stick for to hazard both his life and his health.
My master, Gawyn Goodluck, after me a day,
Because of the weather, thought best his ship to stay,
And now that I have the rough surges so well past,
God grant I may find all things safe here at last.
Then will I think all my travail well spent.
Now the first point wherefore my master hath me sent.
Is to salute dame Christian Custance, his wife
Espoused, whom he tendereth no less than his life.
I must see how it is with her, well or wrong,
And whether for him she doth not now think long.
Then to other friends I have a message or tway,
And then so to return and meet him on the way.
Now will I go knock that I may despatch with speed,
But lo, forth cometh herself happily indeed.

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA II

Christian Custance. Sym Suresby.

C. Custance. I come to see if any more stirring be here,
But what stranger is this which doth to me appear?
Sym Sure. I will speak to her. Dame, the Lord you save and see.
C. Custance. What, friend Sym Suresby? Forsooth, right welcome ye be!
How doth mine own Gawyn Goodluck, I pray thee tell?
Sym Sure. When he knoweth of your health he will be perfect well.
C. Custance. If he have perfect health, I am as I would be.
Sym Sure. Such news will please him well, this is as it should be.
C. Custance. I think now long for him.
Sym Sure. And he as long for you.
C. Custance. When will he be at home?
Sym Sure. His heart is here e'en now,
His body cometh after.
C. Custance. I would see that fain.
Sym Sure. As fast as wind and sail can carry it amain.
But what two men are yond coming hitherward?
C. Custance. Now I shrew their best Christmas cheeks both togetherward.

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA III

Christian Custance. Sym Suresby. Ralph Roister. Mathew Merygreeke. Trupenie.

C. Custance. What mean these lewd fellows thus to trouble me still?
Sym Suresby here perchance shall thereof deem some ill,
And shall suspect in me some point of naughtiness —
And they come hitherward!
Sym Sure. What is their business?
C. Custance. I have nought to them; nor they to me in sadness.
Sym Sure. Let us hearken them; somewhat there is, I fear it.
R. Roister. I will speak out aloud best, that she may hear it.
M. Mery. Nay, alas, ye may so fear her out of her wit.
R. Roister. By the cross of my sword, I will hurt her no whit.
M. Mery. Will ye do no harm indeed? shall I trust your word?
R. Roister. By Roister Doister's faith, I will speak but in bord.
Sym Sure. Let us hearken them; somewhat there is, I fear it.
R. Roister. I will speak out aloud, I care not who hear it:
Sirs, see that my harness, my target, and my shield,
Be made as bright now, as when I was last in field,
As white as I should to war again to-morrow:
For sick shall I be, but I work some folk sorrow.
Therefore see that all shine as bright as Saint George,
Or as doth a key newly come from the smith's forge,
I would have my sword and harness to shine so bright,
That I might therewith dim mine enemies' sight,
I would have it cast beams as fast, I tell you plain,
As doth the glittering grass after a shower of rain.
And see that in case I should need to come to arming,
All things may be ready at a minute's warning,
For such chance may chance in an hour, do ye hear?
M. Mery. As perchance shall not chance again in seven year.
R. Roister. Now draw we near to her, and hear what shall be said.
M. Mery. But I would not have you make her too much afraid.
R. Roister. Well found, sweet wife, I trust, for all this your sour look.
C. Custance. "Wife" — why call ye me wife?
Sym Sure. "Wife?" This gear goeth a-crook.
M. Mery. Nay, mistress Custance, I warrant you, our letter
Is not as we read e'en now, but much better,
And where ye half stomached this gentleman afore.
For this same letter, ye will love him now therefore,
Nor it is not this letter, though ye were a queen,
That should break marriage between you twain, I ween,
C. Custance. I did not refuse him for the letter's sake.
R. Roister. Then ye are content me for your husband to take?
C. Custance. You for my husband to take? nothing less, truly.
R. Roister. Yea, say so, sweet spouse, afore strangers hardily.
M. Mery. And though I have here his letter of love with me,
Yet his ring and tokens he sent, keep safe with ye.
C. Custance. A mischief take his tokens, and him and thee too!
But what prate I with fools? have I naught else to do?
Come in with me, Sym Suresby, to take some repast.
Sym Sure. I must ere I drink, by your leave, go in all haste,
To a place or two, with earnest letters of his.

C. Custance. Then come drink here with me.
Sym Sure. I thank you!
C. Custance. Do not miss.
You shall have a token to your master with you.
Sym Sure. No tokens this time, gramercies, God be with you. (*Exeat.*)
C. Custance. Surely this fellow misdeemeth some ill in me,
Which thing but God help, will go near to spill me.
R. Roister. Yea, farewell, fellow, and tell thy master Goodluck
That he cometh too late of this blossom to pluck
Let him keep him there still, or at leastwise make no haste,
As for his labour hither he shall spend in waste.
His betters be in place now.
M. Mery. As long as it will hold.
C. Custance. I will be even with thee, thou beast, thou mayst be bold!
R. Roister. Will ye have us then?
C. Custance. I will never have thee!
R. Roister. Then will I have you?
C. Custance. No, the devil shall have thee!
I have gotten this hour more shame and harm by thee,
Than all thy life days thou canst do me honesty.
M. Mery. Why now may ye see what it cometh to, in the end,
To make a deadly foe of your most loving friend;
And, i-wis, this letter, if ye would hear it now —
C. Custance. I will hear none of it.
M. Mery. In faith, would ravish you.
C. Custance. He hath stained my name for ever, this is clear.
R. Roister. I can make all as well in an hour.
M. Mery. As ten year.
How say ye, will ye have him?
C. Custance. No.
M. Mery. Will ye take him?
C. Custance. I defy him.
M. Mery. At my word?
C. Custance. A shame take him.
Waste no more wind, for it will never be.
M. Mery. This one fault with twain shall be mended, ye shall see.
Gentle mistress Custance, now, good mistress Custance!
Honey mistress Custance, now, sweet mistress Custance!
Golden mistress Custance, now, white mistress Custance!
Silken mistress Custance, now, fair mistress Custance!
C. Custance. Faith, rather than to marry with such a doltish lout,
I would match myself with a beggar, out of doubt.
M. Mery. Then I can say no more; to speed we are not like,
Except ye rap out a rag of your rhetoric.
C. Custance. Speak not of winning me, for it shall never be so!
R. Roister. Yes, dame, I will have you, whether ye will or no!
I command you to love me, wherefore should ye not?
Is not my love to you chafing and burning hot?
M. Mery. To her! That is well said.
R. Roister. Shall I so break my brain
To dote upon you, and ye not love us again?
M. Mery. Well said yet!
C. Custance. Go to, you goose!
R. Roister. I say, Kit Custance,
In case ye will not ha'ze, — well, better "yes," perchance!
C. Custance. Avaunt, losel! pick thee hence.
M. Mery. Well, sir, ye perceive,
For all your kind offer, she will not you receive.
R. Roister. Then a straw for her, and a straw for her again,
She shall not be my wife, would she never so fain —
No, and though she would be at ten thousand pound cost!
M. Mery. Lo, dame, ye may see what an husband ye have lost.
C. Custance. Yea, no force, a jewel much better lost than found.

M. MERY. Ah, ye will not believe how this doth my heart wound.
How should a marriage between you be toward,
If both parties draw back, and become so froward?

R. ROISTER. Nay, dame, I will fire thee out of thy house,
And destroy thee and all thine, and that by and by!

M. MERY. Nay, for the passion of God, sir, do not so.

R. ROISTER. Yes, except she will say yea to that she said no.

C. CUSTANCE. And what — be there no officers, trow we, in town
To check idle loiterers, bragging up and down?
Where be they, by whom vagabonds should be repressed,
That poor silly widows might live in peace and rest?
Shall I never rid thee out of my company?
I will call for help. What ho, come forth, Trupenie!

[*Enter* TRUPENIE.]

TRUPENIE. Anon. What is your will, mistress? did ye call me?

C. CUSTANCE. Yea. Go run apace, and as fast as may be,
Pray Tristram Trustie, my most assured friend,
To be here by and by, that he may me defend.

TRUPENIE. That message so quickly shall be done, by God's grace,
That at my return ye shall say, I went apace. (*Exeat.*)

C. CUSTANCE. Then shall we see, I trow, whether ye shall do me harm.

R. ROISTER. Yes, in faith, Kit, I shall thee and thine so charm,
That all women incarnate by thee may beware.

C. CUSTANCE. Nay, as for charming me, come hither if thou dare,
I shall clout thee till thou stink, both thee and thy train,
And coil thee mine own hands, and send thee home again.

R. ROISTER. Yea, sayest thou me that, dame? Dost thou me threaten?
Go we, I still see whether I shall be beaten!

M. MERY. Nay, for the pashe of God, let me now treat peace,
For bloodshed will there be in case this strife increase.
Ah, good dame Custance, take better way with you.

C. CUSTANCE. Let him do his worst.

M. MERY. Yield in time.

R. ROISTER. Come hence, thou.

(*Exeant* ROISTER *et* MERY.)

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA IV

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE. ANNOT ALYFACE. TIBET T. M. MUMBLECRUST.

C. CUSTANCE. So, sirrah, if I should not with him take this way,
I should not be rid of him, I think, till doom's day.
I will call forth my folks, that, without any mocks,
If he come again we may give him raps and knocks.
Madge Mumblecrust, come forth, and Tibet Talkapace.
Yea, and come forth too, mistress Annot Alyface.

AN. ALYFACE. I come.

TIBET. And I am here.

M. MUMBLE. And I am here too, at length.

C. CUSTANCE. Like warriors, if need be, ye must show your strength.
The man that this day hath thus beguiled you,
Is Ralph Roister Doister, whom ye know well inowe,
The most lout and dastard that ever on ground trod.

TIB. TALK. I see all folk mock him when he goeth abroad.

C. CUSTANCE. What, pretty maid, will ye talk when I speak?

TIB TALK. No, forsooth, good mistress!

C. CUSTANCE. Will ye my tale break?
He threateneth to come hither with all his force to fight,
I charge you, if he come, on him with all your might.

M. Mumble. I with my distaff will reach him one rap.
Tib. Talk. And I with my new broom will sweep him one swap,
And then with our great club I will reach him one rap.
An. Alyface. And I with our skimmer will fling him one flap.
Tib. Talk. Then Trupenie's firefork will him shrewdly fray,
And you with the spit may drive him quite away.
C. Custance. Go, make all ready, that it may be even so.
Tib. Talk. For my part I shrew them that last about it go. (*Exeant.*)

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA V

Christian Custance. Trupenie. Tristram Trustie.

C. Custance. Trupenie did promise me to run a great pace,
My friend Tristram Trustie to fet into this place.
Indeed he dwelleth hence a good start, I confess:
But yet a quick messenger might twice since, as I guess,
Have gone and come again. Ah, yond I spy him now!
Trupenie. Ye are a slow goer, sir, I make God avow.
My mistress Custance will in me put all the blame,
Your legs be longer than mine — come apace for shame!
C. Custance. I can thee thank, Trupenie, thou hast done right well.
Trupenie. Mistress, since I went no grass hath grown on my heel,
But master Tristram Trustie here maketh no speed.
C. Custance. That he came at all, I thank him in very deed,
For now have I need of the help of some wise man.
T. Trustie. Then may I be gone again, for none such I am.
Trupenie. Ye may be by your going — for no Alderman
Can go, I dare say, a sadder pace than ye can.
C. Custance. Trupenie, get thee in. Thou shalt among them know,
How to use thyself like a proper man, I trow.
Trupenie. I go. (*Ex.*)
C. Custance. Now, Tristram Trustie, I thank you right much.
For, at my first sending, to come ye never grutch.
T. Trustie. Dame Custance, God ye save, and while my life shall last,
For my friend Goodluck's sake ye shall not send in wast.
C. Custance. He shall give you thanks.
T. Trustie. I will do much for his sake.
C. Custance. But alack, I fear, great displeasure shall be take.
T. Trustie. Wherefore?
C. Custance. For a foolish matter.
T. Trustie. What is your cause?
C. Custance. I am ill accombred with a couple of daws.
T. Trustie. Nay, weep not, woman, but tell me what your cause is.
As concerning my friend is anything amiss?
C. Custance. No, not on my part; but here was Sym Suresby —
T. Trustie. He was with me and told me so.
C. Custance. And he stood by
While Ralph Roister Doister with help of Merygreeke,
For promise of marriage did unto me seek.
T. Trustie. And had ye made any promise before them twain?
C. Custance. No, I had rather be torn in pieces and slain,
No man hath my faith and troth, but Gawyn Goodluck,
And that before Suresby did I say, and there stuck,
But of certain letters there were such words spoken —
T. Trustie. He told me that too.
C. Custance. And of a ring and token, —
That Suresby I spied did more than half suspect,
That I my faith to Gawyn Goodluck did reject.

T. Trustie. But there was no such matter, dame Custance, indeed?
C. Custance. If ever my head thought it, God send me ill speed!
Wherefore, I beseech you, with me to be a witness,
That in all my life I never intended thing less,
And what a brainsick fool Ralph Roister Doister is,
Yourself know well enough.
T. Trustie. Ye say full true, i-wis.
C. Custance. Because to be his wife I ne grant nor apply,
Hither will he come, he sweareth, by and by,
To kill both me and mine, and beat down my house flat.
Therefore I pray your aid.
T. Trustie. I warrant you that.
C. Custance. Have I so many years lived a sober life,
And showed myself honest, maid, widow, and wife,
And now to be abused in such a vile sort?
Ye see how poor widows live all void of comfort.
T. Trustie. I warrant him do you no harm nor wrong at all.
C. Custance. No, but Mathew Merygreeke doth me most appall,
That he would join himself with such a wretched lout.
T. Trustie. He doth it for a jest, I know him out of doubt,
And here cometh Merygreeke.
C. Custance. Then shall we hear his mind.

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA VI

Merygreeke. Christian Custance. Trist. Trustie.

M. Mery. Custance and Trustie both, I do you here well find.
C. Custance. Ah, Mathew Merygreeke, ye have used me well.
M. Mery. Now for altogether ye must your answer tell.
Will ye have this man, woman, or else will ye not?
Else will he come, never boar so brim nor toast so hot.
Tris. and Cus. But why join ye with him?
T. Trustie. For mirth?
C. Custance. Or else in sadness?
M. Mery. The more fond of you both! Hardily the matter guess.
T. Trustie. Lo, how say ye, dame?
M. Mery. Why do ye think, dame Custance,
That in this wooing I have meant ought but pastance?
C. Custance. Much things ye spake, I wot, to maintain his dotage.
M. Mery. But well might ye judge I spake it all in mockage.
For why? Is Roister Doister a fit husband for you?
T. Trustie. I daresay ye never thought it.
M. Mery. No, to God I vow.
And did not I know afore of the insurance
Between Gawyn Goodluck and Christian Custance?
And did not I for the nonce, by my conveyance,
Read his letter in a wrong sense for dalliance?
That if you could have take it up at the first bound,
We should thereat such a sport and pastime have found,
That all the whole town should have been the merrier.
C. Custance. Ill ache your heads both! I was never wearier,
Nor never more vexed since the first day I was born!
T. Trustie. But very well I wist he here did all in scorn.
C. Custance. But I feared thereof to take dishonesty.
M. Mery. This should both have made sport and showed your honesty,
And Goodluck, I dare swear, your wit therein would 'low.
T. Trustie. Yea, being no worse than we know it to be now.
M. Mery. And nothing yet too late; for when I come to him,

Hither will he repair with a sheep's look full grim,
By plain force and violence to drive you to yield.
C. Custance. If ye two bid me, we will with him pitch a field,
I and my maids together.
M. Mery. Let us see! be bold.
C. Custance. Ye shall see women's war!
T. Trustie. That fight will I behold!
M. Mery. If occasion serve, taking his part full brim,
I will strike at you, but the rap shall light on him,
When we first appear.
C. Custance. Then will I run away
As though I were afeard.
T. Trustie. Do you that part well play
And I will sue for peace.
M. Mery. And I will set him on.
Then will he look as fierce as a Cotsold lion.
T. Trustie. But when goest thou for him?
M. Mery. That do I very now.
C. Custance. Ye shall find us here.
M. Mery. Well, God have mercy on you! (*Ex.*)
T. Trustie. There is no cause of fear; the least boy in the street —
C. Custance. Nay, the least girl I have, will make him take his feet.
But hark! methink they make preparation.
T. Trustie. No force, it will be a good recreation!
C. Custance. I will stand within, and step forth speedily,
And so make as though I ran away dreadfully.

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA VII

R. Roister. M. Merygreeke. C. Custance. D. Doughtie. Harpax. Tristram Trustie.

R. Roister. Now, sirs, keep your ray, and see your hearts be stout.
But where be these caitiffs? methink they dare not rout!
How sayest thou, Merygreeke? — what doth Kit Custance say?
M. Mery. I am loth to tell you.
R. Roister. Tush, speak, man — yea or nay?
M. Mery. Forsooth, sir, I have spoken for you all that I can,
But if ye win her, ye must e'en play the man,
E'en to fight it out, ye must a man's heart take.
R. Roister. Yes, they shall know, and thou knowest, I have a stomach.
[M. Mery.] "A stomach," quod you, yea, as good as e'er man had!
R. Roister. I trow they shall find and feel that I am a lad.
M. Mery. By this cross, I have seen you eat your meat as well
As any that e'er I have seen of or heard tell.
"A stomach," quod you? He that will that deny,
I know, was never at dinner in your company.
R. Roister. Nay, the stomach of a man it is that I mean.
M. Mery. Nay, the stomach of a horse or a dog, I ween.
R. Roister. Nay, a man's stomach with a weapon, mean I.
M. Mery. Ten men can scarce match you with a spoon in a pie.
R. Roister. Nay, the stomach of a man to try in strife.
M. Mery. I never saw your stomach cloyed yet in my life.
R. Roister. Tush, I mean in strife or fighting to try.
M. Mery. We shall see how ye will strike now, being angry.
R. Roister. Have at thy pate then, and save thy head if thou may.
M. Mery. Nay, then have at your pate again by this day.
R. Roister. Nay, thou mayst not strike at me again in no wise.
M. Mery. I cannot in fight make to you such warrantise:
But as for your foes, here let them the bargain bie.
R. Roister. Nay, as for they, shall every mother's child die.
And in this my fume a little thing might make me

To beat down house and all, and else the devil take me!
M. Mery. If I were as ye be, by Gog's dear mother,
I would not leave one stone upon another,
Though she would redeem it with twenty thousand pounds.
R. Roister. It shall be even so, by His lily wounds.
M. Mery. Be not at one with her upon any amends.
R. Roister. No, though she make to me never so many friends,
Nor if all the world for her would undertake,
No, not God himself neither, shall not her peace make,
On, therefore, march forward! — Soft, stay a while yet.
M. Mery. On.
R. Roister. Tarry.
M. Mery. Forth.
R. Roister. Back.
M. Mery. On.
R. Roister. Soft! Now forward set!
C. Custance. What business have we here? Out! alas, alas!
R. Roister. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Didst thou see that, Merygreeke, how afraid she was?
Didst thou see how she fled apace out of my sight?
Ah, good sweet Custance, I pity her by this light.
M. Mery. That tender heart of yours will mar altogether, —
Thus will ye be turned with wagging of a feather.
R. Roister. On, sirs, keep your ray.
M. Mery. On, forth, while this gear is hot.
R. Roister. Soft, the arms of Caleys, I have one thing forgot!
M. Mery. What lack we now?
R. Roister. Retire, or else we be all slain!
M. Mery. Back, for the pash of God! back, sirs, back again!
What is the great matter?
R. Roister. This hasty forthgoing
Had almost brought us all to utter undoing,
It made me forget a thing most necessary.
M. Mery. Well remembered of a captain, by Saint Mary.
R. Roister. It is a thing must be had.
M. Mery. Let us have it then.
R. Roister. But I wot not where nor how.
M. Mery. Then wot not I when.
But what is it?
R. Roister. Of a chief thing I am to seek.
M. Mery. Tut, so will ye be, when ye have studied a week.
But tell me what it is?
R. Roister. I lack yet an headpiece.
M. Mery. The kitchen collocavit, the best hens to grease,
Run, fet it, Dobinet, and come at once withal,
And bring with thee my pot-gun, hanging by the wall. (*Exit* Dobinet.)
I have seen your head with it, full many a time,
Covered as safe as it had been with a skrine;
And I warrant it save your head from any stroke,
Except perchance to be amazed with the smoke.
I warrant your head therewith, except for the mist,
As safe as if it were fast locked up in a chest.
And lo, here our Dobinet cometh with it now.

[*Re-enter* Dobinet.]

D. Doughtie. It will cover me to the shoulders well enow.
M. Mery. Let me see it on.
R. Roister. In faith, it doth metely well.
M. Mery. There can be no fitter thing. Now ye must us tell
What to do.
R. Roister. Now forth in ray, sirs, and stop no more!
M. Mery. Now, Saint George to borrow, drum dub-a-dub afore!

T. Trustie. What mean you to do, sir, commit manslaughter?
R. Roister. To kill forty such is a matter of laughter.
T. Trustie. And who is it, sir, whom ye intend thus to spill?
R. Roister. Foolish Custance here forceth me against my will.
T. Trustie. And is there no mean your extreme wrath to slake?
She shall some amends unto your good maship make.
R. Roister. I will none amends.
T. Trustie. Is her offence so sore?
M. Mery. And he were a lout she could have done no more.
She hath called him fool, and dressed him like a fool,
Mocked him like a fool, used him like a fool.
T. Trustie. Well, yet the sheriff, the justice, or constable,
Her misdemeanour to punish might be able.
R. Roister. No, sir, I mine own self will, in this present cause,
Be sheriff, and justice, and whole judge of the laws;
This matter to amend, all officers be I shall,
Constable, bailiff, sergeant.
M. Mery. And hangman and all.
T. Trustie. Yet a noble courage, and the heart of a man,
Should more honour win by bearing with a woman.
Therefore take the law, and let her answer thereto.
R. Roister. Merygreeke, the best way were even so to do.
What honour should it be with a woman to fight?
M. Mery. And what then, will ye thus forgo and lese your right?
R. Roister. Nay, I will take the law on her withouten grace.
T. Trustie. Or, if your maship could pardon this one trespass,
I pray you forgive her!
R. Roister. Ho!
M. Mery. Tush, tush, sir, do not!
Be good, master, to her.
R. Roister. Hoh!
M. Mery. Tush, I say, do not.
And what! shall your people here return straight home?
T. Trustie. Yea, levy the camp, sirs, and hence again each one.
R. Roister. But be still in readiness, if I hap to call.
I cannot tell what sudden chance may befall.
M. Mery. Do not off your harness, sirs, I you advise,
At the least for this fortnight in no manner wise.
Perchance in an hour, when all ye think least,
Our master's appetite to fight will be best.
But soft, ere ye go, have one at Custance' house.
R. Roister. Soft, what wilt thou do?
M. Mery. Once discharge my harquebouse,
And, for my heart's ease, have once more with my potgun.
R. Roister. Hold thy hands, else is all our purpose clean fordone.
M. Mery. And it cost me my life.
R. Roister. I say, thou shalt not.
M. Mery. By the Matte, but I will. Have once more with hail shot.
I will have some pennyworth, I will not lese all.

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA VIII

M. Merygreeke. C. Custance. R. Roister. Tib. Talk. An. Alyface. M. Mumblecrust. Trupenie. Dobinet Doughtie. Harpax. *Two drums with their ensigns.*

C. Custance. What caitiffs are those that so shake my house wall?
M. Mery. Ah, sirrah! now, Custance, if ye had so much wit,
I would see you ask pardon, and yourselves submit.
C. Custance. Have I still this ado with a couple of fools?
M. Mery. Hear ye what she saith?
C. Custance. Maidens come forth with your tools!
R. Roister. In array!
M. Mery. Dubbadub, sirrah!

R. Roister. In array!
They come suddenly on us.
M. Mery. Dubbadub!
R. Roister. In array!
That ever I was born, we are taken tardy.
M. Mery. Now, sirs, quit ourselves like tall men and hardy!
C. Custance. On afore, Trupenie! Hold thine own, Annot!
On toward them, Tibet! for 'scape us they cannot!
Come forth, Madge Mumblecrust, to stand fast together!
M. Mery. God send us a fair day!
R. Roister. See, they march on hither!
Tib. Talk. But, mistress —
C. Custance. What sayest thou?
Tib. Talk. Shall I go fet our goose?
C. Custance. What to do?
Tib. Talk. To yonder captain I will turn her loose,
And she gape and hiss at him, as she doth at me,
I durst jeopard my hand she will make him flee.
C. Custance. On forward!
R. Roister. They come!
M. Mery. Stand!
R. Roister. Hold!
M. Mery. Keep!
R. Roister. There!
M. Mery. Strike!
R. Roister. Take heed!
C. Custance. Well said, Trupenie!
Trupenie. Ah, whoresons!
C. Custance. Well done, indeed.
M. Mery. Hold thine own, Harpax! down with them, Dobinet!
C. Custance. Now Madge, there Annot! now stick them, Tibet!
Tib. Talk. All my chief quarrel is to this same little knave,
That beguiled me last day — nothing shall him save.
D. Doughtie. Down with this little quean, that hath at me such spite!
Save you from her, master — it is a very sprite!
C. Custance. I myself will Mounsire Grand Captain undertake.
R. Roister. They win ground!
M. Mery. Save yourself, sir, for God's sake!
R. Roister. Out, alas! I am slain! Help!
M. Mery. Save yourself!
R. Roister. Alas!
M. Mery. Nay, then, have at you, mistress!
R. Roister. Thou hittest me, alas!
M. Mery. I will strike at Custance here.
R. Roister. Thou hittest me!
M. Mery. So I will!
Nay, mistress Custance!
R. Roister. Alas! thou hittest me still.
Hold.
M. Mery. Save yourself, sir.
R. Roister. Help! Out, alas! I am slain!
M. Mery. Truce, hold your hands, truce for a pissing while or twain!
Nay, how say you, Custance, for saving of your life,
Will ye yield and grant to be this gentman's wife?
C. Custance. Ye told me he loved me — call ye this love?
M. Mery. He loved a while even like a turtledove.
C. Custance. Gay love, God save it! — so soon hot, so soon cold.
M. Mery. I am sorry for you — he could love you yet, so he could.
R. Roister. Nay, by Cock's precious, she shall be none of mine!
M. Mery. Why so?
R. Roister. Come away! by the Matte, she is mankine.
I durst adventure the loss of my right hand,
If she did not slee her other husband, —
And see if she prepare not again to fight!
M. Mery. What then? Saint George to borrow, our ladies' knight!
R. Roister. Slee else whom she will, by Gog, she shall not slee me!
M. Mery. How then?
R. Roister. Rather than to be slain, I will flee.
C. Custance. To it again, my knightesses! Down with them all!
R. Roister. Away, away, away! she will else kill us all.

M. Mery. Nay, stick to it, like an hardy man and a tall.
R. Roister. Oh bones, thou hittest me! Away, or else die we shall.
M. Mery. Away, for the pashe of our sweet Lord Jesus Christ.
C. Custance. Away, lout and lubber, or I shall be thy priest. (*Exeant om.*)
So this field is ours, we have driven them all away.
Tib. Talk. Thanks to God, mistress, ye have had a fair day.
C. Custance. Well, now go ye in, and make yourself some good cheer.
Omnes *pariter.* We go.
T. Trustie. Ah, sir, what a field we have had here!
C. Custance. Friend Tristram, I pray you be a witness with me.
T. Trustie. Dame Custance, I shall depose for your honesty,
And now fare ye well, except something else ye would.
C. Custance. Not now, but when I need to send I will be bold. (*Exeat.*)
I thank you for these pains. And now I will get me in.
Now Roister Doister will no more wooing begin. (*Ex.*)

ACTUS V, SCÆNA I

Gawyn Goodluck. Sym Suresby.

G. Good. Sym Suresby, my trusty man, now advise thee well,
And see that no false surmises thou me tell.
Was there such ado about Custance of a truth?
Sym Sure. To report that I heard and saw, to me is ruth,
But both my duty and name and property
Warneth me to you to show fidelity.
It may be well enough, and I wish it so to be;
She may herself discharge, and try her honesty —
Yet their claim to her methought was very large,
For with letters, rings and tokens, they did her charge,
Which when I heard and saw I would none to you bring.
G. Good. No, by Saint Marie, I allow thee in that thing.
Ah, sirrah, now I see truth in the proverb old,
All things that shineth is not by and by pure gold!
If any do live a woman of honesty,
I would have sworn Christian Custance had been she.
Sym Sure. Sir, though I to you be a servant true and just,
Yet do not ye therefore your faithful spouse mistrust.
But examine the matter, and if ye shall it find
To be all well, be not ye for my words unkind.
G. Good. I shall do that is right, and as I see cause why —
But here cometh Custance forth, we shall know by and by.

ACTUS V, SCÆNA II

C. Custance. Gawyn Goodluck. Sym Suresby.

C. Custance. I come forth to see and hearken for news good,
For about this hour is the time of likelihood,
That Gawyn Goodluck by the sayings of Suresby
Would be at home, and lo, yond I see him, I!
What! Gawyn Goodluck, the only hope of my life!
Welcome home, and kiss me, your true espoused wife.
G. Good. Nay, soft, dame Custance; I must first, by your licence,
See whether all things be clear in your conscience.
I hear of your doings to me very strange.
C. Custance. What! fear ye that my faith towards you should change?
G. Good. I must needs mistrust ye be elsewhere entangled,
For I hear that certain men with you have wrangled
About the promise of marriage by you to them made.
C. Custance. Could any man's report your mind therein persuade?

G. Good. Well, ye must therein declare yourself to stand clear,
Else I and you, dame Custance, may not join this year.
C. Custance. Then would I were dead, and fair laid in my grave!
Ah, Suresby, is this the honesty that ye have,
To hurt me with your report, not knowing the thing?
Sym Sure. If ye be honest, my words can hurt you nothing,
But what I heard and saw, I might not but report.
C. Custance. Ah, Lord, help poor widows, destitute of comfort!
Truly, most dear spouse, nought was done but for pastance.
G. Good. But such kind of sporting is homely dalliance.
C. Custance. If ye knew the truth, ye would take all in good part.
G. Good. By your leave, I am not half well skilled in that art.
C. Custance. It was none but Roister Doister, that foolish mome.
G. Good. Yea, Custance, better, they say, a bad 'scuse than none.
C. Custance. Why, Tristram Trustie, sir, your true and faithful friend,
Was privy both to the beginning and the end.
Let him be the judge, and for me testify.
G. Good. I will the more credit that he shall verify,
And because I will the truth know e'en as it is,
I will to him myself, and know all without miss.
Come on, Sym Suresby, that before my friend thou may
Avouch the same words, which thou didst to me say. (*Exeant*).

ACTUS V, SCÆNA III

Christian Custance.

C. Custance. O Lord! how necessary it is now of days
That each body live uprightly all manner ways,
For let never so little a gap be open,
And be sure of this, the worst shall be spoken.
How innocent stand I in this for deed or thought,
And yet see what mistrust towards me it hath wrought!
But thou, Lord, knowest all folks' thoughts and eke intents,
And thou art the deliverer of all innocents.
Thou didst help the advoutress, that she might be amended,
Much more then help, Lord, that never ill intended.
Thou didst help Susanna, wrongfully accused,
And no less dost thou see, Lord, how I am now abused.
Thou didst help Hester, when she should have died,
Help also, good Lord, that my truth may be tried.
Yet if Gawyn Goodluck with Tristram Trustie speak,
I trust of ill report the force shall be but weak.
And lo, yond they come, sadly talking together,
I will abide, and not shrink for their coming hither.

ACTUS V, SCÆNA IV

Gawyn Goodluck. Tristram Trustie.
C. Custance. Sym Suresby.

G. Good. And was it none other than ye to me report?
Tristram. No, and here were ye wished to have seen the sport.
G. Good. Would I had, rather than half of that in my purse!
Sym Sure. And I do much rejoice the matter was no worse,
And like as to open it I was to you faithful,
So of dame Custance' honest truth I am joyful,
For God forfend that I should hurt her by false report.
G. Good. Well, I will no longer hold her in discomfort.
C. Custance. Now come they hitherward, I trust all shall be well.

G. Good. Sweet Custance, neither heart can think nor tongue tell,
How much I joy in your constant fidelity!
Come now, kiss me, the pearl of perfect honesty.
C. Custance. God let me no longer to continue in life,
Than I shall towards you continue a true wife.
G. Good. Well, now to make you for this some part of amends,
I shall desire first you, and then such of our friends
As shall to you seem best, to sup at home with me,
Where at your fought field we shall laugh and merry be.
Sym Sure. And mistress, I beseech you, take with me no grief;
I did a true man's part, not wishing you reprief.
C. Custance. Though hasty reports, through surmises growing,
May of poor innocents be utter overthrowing,
Yet because to thy master thou hast a true heart,
And I know mine own truth, I forgive thee for my part.
G. Good. Go we all to my house, and of this gear no more.
Go, prepare all things, Sym Suresby; hence, run afore.
Sym Sure. I go. (*Ex.*)
G. Good. But who cometh yond, — M. Merygreeke?
C. Custance. Roister Doister's champion, I shrew his best cheek!
T. Trustie. Roister Doister self, your wooer, is with him too.
Surely something there is with us they have to do.

ACTUS V, SCÆNA V

M. Merygreeke. Ralph Roister.
Gawyn Goodluck. Tristram Trustie.
C. Custance.

M. Mery. Yond I see Gawyn Goodluck, to whom lieth my message;
I will first salute him after his long voyage,
And then make all thing well concerning your behalf.
R. Roister. Yea, for the pash of God.
M. Mery. Hence out of sight, ye calf,
Till I have spoke with them, and then I will you fet.
R. Roister. In God's name!
(*Exit* R. Roister.)
M. Mery. What, master Gawyn Goodluck, well met!
And from your long voyage I bid you right welcome home.
G. Good. I thank you.
M. Mery. I come to you from an honest mome.
G. Good. Who is that?
M. Mery. Roister Doister, that doughty kite.
C. Custance. Fie! I can scarce abide ye should his name recite.
M. Mery. Ye must take him to favour, and pardon all past;
He heareth of your return, and is full ill aghast.
G. Good. I am right well content he have with us some cheer.
C. Custance. Fie upon him, beast! then will not I be there.
G. Good. Why, Custance, do ye hate him more than ye love me?
C. Custance. But for your mind, sir, where he were would I not be.
T. Trustie. He would make us all laugh.
M. Mery. Ye ne'er had better sport.
G. Good. I pray you, sweet Custance, let him to us resort.
C. Custance. To your will I assent.
M. Mery. Why, such a fool it is,
As no man for good pastime would forgo or miss.
G. Good. Fet him to go with us.
M. Mery. He will be a glad man. (*Ex.*)
T. Trustie. We must to make us mirth, maintain him all we can.
And lo, yond he cometh, and Merygreeke with him.
C. Custance. At his first entrance ye shall see I will him trim.

But first let us hearken the gentleman's wise talk.
T. Trustie. I pray you, mark, if ever ye saw crane so stalk.

ACTUS V, SCÆNA VI

R. Roister. M. Merygreeke. C. Custance. G. Goodluck. T. Trustie. D. Doughtie. Harpax.

R. Roister. May I then be bold?
M. Mery. I warrant you, on my word,
They say they shall be sick, but ye be at their board.
R. Roister. They were not angry, then?
M. Mery. Yes, at first, and made strange,
But when I said your anger to favour should change,
And therewith had commended you accordingly,
They were all in love with your maship by and by,
And cried you mercy that they had done you wrong.
R. Roister. For why no man, woman, nor child can hate me long.
M. Mery. "We fear," quod they, "he will be avenged one day,
Then for a penny give all our lives we may."
R. Roister. Said they so indeed?
M. Mery. Did they? yea, even with one voice —
"He will forgive all," quod I. Oh, how they did rejoice!
R. Roister. Ha, ha, ha!
M. Mery. "Go fet him," say they, "while he is in good mood,
For have his anger who lust, we will not, by the Rood."
R. Roister. I pray God that it be all true, that thou hast me told,
And that she fight no more.
M. Mery. I warrant you, be bold.
To them, and salute them!
R. Roister. Sirs, I greet you all well!
Omnes. Your mastership is welcome.
C. Custance. Saving my quarrel —
For sure I will put you up into the Exchequer.
M. Mery. Why so? better nay — wherefore?
C. Custance. For an usurer.
R. Roister. I am no usurer, good mistress, by His arms!
M. Mery. When took he gain of money to any man's harms?
C. Custance. Yes, a foul usurer he is, ye shall see else.
R. Roister. Didst not thou promise she would pick no mo quarrels?
C. Custance. He will lend no blows, but he have in recompense
Fifteen for one, which is too much of conscience.
R. Roister. Ah, dame, by the ancient law of arms, a man
Hath no honour to foil his hands on a woman.
C. Custance. And where other usurers take their gains yearly,
This man is angry but he have his by and by.
G. Good. Sir, do not for her sake bear me your displeasure.
M. Mery. Well, he shall with you talk thereof more at leisure.
Upon your good usage, he will now shake your hand.
R. Roister. And much heartily welcome from a strange land.
M. Mery. Be not afeard, Gawyn, to let him shake your fist.
G. Good. Oh, the most honest gentleman that e'er I wist.
I beseech your maship to take pain to sup with us.
M. Mery. He shall not say you nay, and I too, by Jesus,
Because ye shall be friends, and let all quarrels pass.
R. Roister. I will be as good friends with them as ere I was.
M. Mery. Then let me fet your quire that we may have a song.
R. Roister. Go.
(*Exit* M. Mery.)
G. Good. I have heard no melody all this year long.

[*Re-enter* M. Mery.]

M. Mery. Come on, sirs, quickly.

R. Roister. Sing on, sirs, for my friends' sake.
D. Dough. Call ye these your friends?
R. Roister. Sing on, and no mo words make.
(*Here they sing.*)
G. Good. The Lord preserve our most noble Queen of renown,
And her virtues reward with the heavenly crown.
C. Custance. The Lord strengthen her most excellent Majesty,
Long to reign over us in all prosperity.
T. Trustie. That her godly proceedings the faith to defend,
He may 'stablish and maintain through to the end.
M. Mery. God grant her, as she doth, the Gospel to protect,
Learning and virtue to advance, and vice to correct.
R. Roister. God grant her loving subjects both the mind and grace,
Her most godly proceedings worthily to embrace.
Harpax. Her highness' most worthy counsellors, God prosper
With honour and love of all men to minister.
Omnes. God grant the nobility her to serve and love,
With all the whole commonty as doth them behove.

Amen

FINIS

THE SPANISH TRAGEDY

OR

HIERONIMO IS MAD AGAIN

By THOMAS KYD

(*c.* 1586)

[DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Ghost of Andrea, a Spanish nobleman, } Chorus.
Revenge.
King of Spain.
Don Cyprian, Duke of Castile, his brother.
Lorenzo, the Duke's son.
Bel-imperia, Lorenzo's sister.
Viceroy of Portugal.
Balthazar, his son.
Don Pedro, the Viceroy's brother.
Hieronimo, Marshal of Spain.
Isabella, his wife.
Horatio, their son.
Spanish General.
Deputy.
Three Citizens.
Portuguese Ambassador.
Don Bazulto, an old man.
Alexandro, } Portuguese Noblemen.
Villuppo,
Two Portuguese.
Pedringano, Bel-imperia's servant.
Christophil, Bel-imperia's custodian.
Lorenzo's Page.
Serberine, Balthazar's servant.
Isabella's Maid.
Messenger.
Hangman.
Soliman, Sultan of Turkey (Balthazar), } In Hieronimo's Play.
Erastus, Knight of Rhodes (Lorenzo),
The Bashaw (Hieronimo),
Perseda (Bel-imperia),
Three Kings and three Knights in the first Dumb-show.
Hymen and two torch-bearers in the second.
Bazardo, a Painter, } In the additions to the play.
Pedro and Jaques, Hieronimo's servants,
Army, Royal Suites, Noblemen, Halberdiers, Officers, Three Watchmen, Servants, etc.]

THE SPANISH TRAGEDY

OR

HIERONIMO IS MAD AGAIN

ACT I

[Scene I: Induction.]

(*Enter the* Ghost of Andrea, *and with him* Revenge.)

Ghost. When this eternal substance of my soul
Did live imprison'd in my wanton flesh,
Each in their function serving other's need,
I was a courtier in the Spanish court.
My name was Don Andrea; my descent,
Though not ignoble, yet inferior far
To gracious fortunes of my tender youth:
For there in prime and pride of all my years,
By duteous service and deserving love,
In secret I possess'd a worthy dame,
Which hight sweet Bel-imperia by name.
But in the harvest of my summer joys
Death's winter nipp'd the blossoms of my bliss,
Forcing divorce betwixt my love and me.
For in the late conflict with Portingale
My valour drew me into danger's mouth
Till life to death made passage through my wounds.
When I was slain, my soul descended straight
To pass the flowing stream of Acheron;
But churlish Charon, only boatman there,
Said that, my rites of burial not perform'd,
I might not sit amongst his passengers.
Ere Sol had slept three nights in Thetis' lap,
And slak'd his smoking chariot in her flood,
By Don Horatio, our knight marshal's son,
My funerals and obsequies were done.
Then was the ferryman of hell content
To pass me over to the slimy strand,
That leads to fell Avernus' ugly waves.
There, pleasing Cerberus with honey'd speech,
I pass'd the perils of the foremost porch.
Not far from hence, amidst ten thousand souls,
Sat Minos, Aeacus, and Rhadamanth;
To whom no sooner 'gan I make approach,
To crave a passport for my wand'ring ghost,
But Minos, in graven leaves of lottery,
Drew forth the manner of my life and death.
"This knight," quoth he, "both liv'd and died in love;
And for his love tried fortune of the wars;
And by war's fortune lost both love and life."
"Why then," said Aeacus, "convey him hence,
To walk with lovers in our fields of love,
And spend the course of everlasting time
Under green myrtle-trees and cypress shades."
"No, no," said Rhadamanth, "it were not well,
With loving souls to place a martialist.
He died in war, and must to martial fields,
Where wounded Hector lives in lasting pain,
And Achilles' Myrmidons do scour the plain."
Then Minos, mildest censor of the three,
Made this device to end the difference:
"Send him," quoth he, "to our infernal king,
To doom him as best seems his majesty."
To this effect my passport straight was drawn.
In keeping on my way to Pluto's court,
Through dreadful shades of ever-glooming night,
I saw more sights than thousand tongues can tell,

Or pens can write, or mortal hearts can think.
Three ways there were: that on the right-hand side
Was ready way unto the 'foresaid fields,
Where lovers live and bloody martialists;
But either sort contain'd within his bounds.
The left-hand path, declining fearfully,
Was ready downfall to the deepest hell,
Where bloody Furies shakes their whips of steel,
And poor Ixion turns an endless wheel;
Where usurers are chok'd with melting gold,
And wantons are embrac'd with ugly snakes,
And murderers groan with never-killing wounds,
And perjur'd wights scalded in boiling lead,
And all foul sins with torments overwhelm'd.
'Twixt these two ways I trod the middle path,
Which brought me to the fair Elysian green,
In midst whereof there stands a stately tower,
The walls of brass, the gates of adamant.
Here finding Pluto with his Proserpine,
I show'd my passport, humbled on my knee;
Whereat fair Proserpine began to smile,
And begg'd that only she might give my doom.
Pluto was pleas'd, and seal'd it with a kiss.
Forthwith, Revenge, she rounded thee in th' ear,
And bade thee lead me through the gates of horn,
Where dreams have passage in the silent night.
No sooner had she spoke, but we were here —
I wot not how — in twinkling of an eye.

REVENGE. Then know, Andrea, that thou art arriv'd
Where thou shalt see the author of thy death,
Don Balthazar, the prince of Portingale,
Depriv'd of life by Bel-imperia.
Here sit we down to see the mystery,
And serve for Chorus in this tragedy.

[SCENE II.]

(*Enter* SPANISH KING, GENERAL, CASTILE, *and* HIERONIMO.)

KING. Now say, lord General, how fares our camp?

GEN. All well, my sovereign liege, except some few
That are deceas'd by fortune of the war.

KING. But what portends thy cheerful countenance,
And posting to our presence thus in haste?
Speak, man, hath fortune given us victory?

GEN. Victory, my liege, and that with little loss.

KING. Our Portingals will pay us tribute then?

GEN. Tribute and wonted homage therewithal.

KING. Then bless'd be heaven and guider of the heavens,
From whose fair influence such justice flows.

CAST. *O multum dilecte Deo, tibi militat aether,*
Et conjuratae curvato poplite gentes
Succumbunt: recti soror est victoria juris.

KING. Thanks to my loving brother of Castile.
But, General, unfold in brief discourse
Your form of battle and your war's success,
That, adding all the pleasure of thy news
Unto the height of former happiness,
With deeper wage and greater dignity
We may reward thy blissful chivalry.

GEN. Where Spain and Portingale do jointly knit
Their frontiers, leaning on each other's bound,
There met our armies in their proud array;
Both furnish'd well, both full of hope and fear,
Both menacing alike with daring shows,
Both vaunting sundry colours of device,
Both cheerly sounding trumpets, drums, and fifes,
Both raising dreadful clamours to the sky,
That valleys, hills, and rivers made rebound,
And heav'n itself was frighted with the sound.

Our battles both were pitch'd in squadron form,
Each corner strongly fenc'd with wings of shot;
But ere we join'd and came to push of pike,
I brought a squadron of our readiest shot
From out our rearward to begin the fight:
They brought another wing t' encounter us.
Meanwhile, our ordnance play'd on either side,
And captains strove to have their valours tried.
Don Pedro, their chief horsemen's colonel,
Did with his cornet bravely make attempt
To break the order of our battle ranks:
But Don Rogero, worthy man of war,
March'd forth against him with our musketeers,
And stopp'd the malice of his fell approach.
While they maintain hot skirmish to and fro,
Both battles join, and fall to handy-blows,
Their violent shot resembling th' ocean's rage,
When, roaring loud, and with a swelling tide,
It beats upon the rampiers of huge rocks,
And gapes to swallow neighbour-bounding lands.
Now, while Bellona rageth here and there,
Thick storms of bullets ran like winter's hail,
And shivered lances dark the troubled air.
Pede pes et cuspide cuspis;
Arma sonant armis, vir petiturque viro.
On every side drop captains to the ground,
And soldiers, some ill-maim'd, some slain outright:
Here falls a body sund'red from his head,
There legs and arms lie bleeding on the grass,
Mingled with weapons and unbowell'd steeds,
That scattering overspread the purple plain.
In all this turmoil, three long hours and more,
The victory to neither part inclin'd;
Till Don Andrea, with his brave lanciers,
In their main battle made so great a breach,
That, half dismay'd, the multitude retir'd:
But Balthazar, the Portingals' young prince,
Brought rescue, and encourag'd them to stay.
Here-hence the fight was eagerly renew'd,
And in that conflict was Andrea slain:
Brave man at arms, but weak to Balthazar.
Yet while the prince, insulting over him,
Breath'd out proud vaunts, sounding to our reproach,
Friendship and hardy valour join'd in one
Prick'd forth Horatio, our knight marshal's son,
To challenge forth that prince in single fight.
Not long between these twain the fight endur'd,
But straight the prince was beaten from his horse,
And forc'd to yield him prisoner to his foe.
When he was taken, all the rest they fled,
And our carbines pursu'd them to the death,
Till, Phoebus waving to the western deep,
Our trumpeters were charg'd to sound retreat.

King. Thanks, good lord General, for these good news;
And for some argument of more to come,
Take this and wear it for thy sovereign's sake. (*Gives him his chain.*)
But tell me now, hast thou confirm'd a peace?

Gen. No peace, my liege, but peace conditional,
That if with homage tribute be well paid,
The fury of your forces will be stay'd:
And to this peace their viceroy hath subscrib'd, (*Gives the King a paper.*)
And made a solemn vow that, during life,
His tribute shall be truly paid to Spain.

King. These words, these deeds, become thy person well.
But now, knight marshal, frolic with thy king,
For 'tis thy son that wins this battle's prize.

Hier. Long may he live to serve my sovereign liege,
And soon decay, unless he serve my liege.

King. Nor thou, nor he, shall die without reward. (*A tucket afar off.*)
What means this warning of this trumpet's sound?

GEN. This tells me that your grace's men of war,
Such as war's fortune hath reserv'd from death,
Come marching on towards your royal seat,
To show themselves before your majesty;
For so I gave in charge at my depart.
Whereby by demonstration shall appear
That all, except three hundred or few more,
Are safe return'd, and by their foes enrich'd.

(*The Army enters;* BALTHAZAR, *between* LORENZO *and* HORATIO, *captive.*)

KING. A gladsome sight! I long to see them here. (*They enter and pass by.*)
Was that the warlike prince of Portingale,
That by our nephew was in triumph led?
GEN. It was, my liege, the prince of Portingale.
KING. But what was he that on the other side
Held him by th' arm, as partner of the prize?
HIER. That was my son, my gracious sovereign;
Of whom though from his tender infancy
My loving thoughts did never hope but well,
He never pleas'd his father's eyes till now,
Nor fill'd my heart with over-cloying joys.
KING. Go, let them march once more about these walls,
That, staying them, we may confer and talk
With our brave prisoner and his double guard. [*Exit a messenger.*]
Hieronimo, it greatly pleaseth us
That in our victory thou have a share,
By virtue of thy worthy son's exploit.

(*Enter again.*)

Bring hither the young prince of Portingale;
The rest march on; but, ere they be dismiss'd,
We will bestow on every soldier
Two ducats and on every leader ten,
That they may know our largess welcomes them.
(*Exeunt all but* [*the* KING], BALTHAZAR, LORENZO, *and* HORATIO.)
Welcome, Don Balthaza[illegible]! welcome, nephew!
And thou, Horatio, thou art welcome too.
Young prince, although thy father's hard misdeeds,
In keeping back the tribute that he owes,
Deserve but evil measure at our hands,
Yet shalt thou know that Spain is honourable.
BAL. The trespass that my father made in peace
Is now controll'd by fortune of the wars;
And cards once dealt, it boots not ask why so.
His men are slain, a weakening to his realm;
His colours seiz'd, a blot unto his name;
His son distress'd, a cor'sive to his heart:
These punishments may clear his late offence.
KING. Ah, Balthazar, if he observe this truce,
Our peace will grow the stronger for these wars.
Meanwhile live thou, though not in liberty,
Yet free from bearing any servile yoke;
For in our hearing thy deserts were great,
And in our sight thyself art gracious.
BAL. And I shall study to deserve this grace.
KING. But tell me — for their holding makes me doubt —
To which of these twain art thou prisoner?
LOR. To me, my liege.
HOR. To me, my sovereign.
LOR. This hand first took his courser by the reins.
HOR. But first my lance did put him from his horse.
LOR. I seiz'd his weapon, and enjoy'd it first.
HOR. But first I forc'd him lay his weapons down.
KING. Let go his arm, upon our privilege. (*They let him go.*)
Say, worthy prince, to whether did'st thou yield?
BAL. To him in courtesy, to this perforce.
He spake me fair, this other gave me strokes;
He promis'd life, this other threat'ned death;
He won my love, this other conquer'd me,

And, truth to say, I yield myself to both.
Hier. But that I know your grace for just and wise,
And might seem partial in this difference,
Enforc'd by nature and by law of arms
My tongue should plead for young Horatio's right.
He hunted well that was a lion's death,
Not he that in a garment wore his skin;
So hares may pull dead lions by the beard.
King. Content thee, marshal, thou shalt have no wrong;
And, for thy sake, thy son shall want no right.
Will both abide the censure of my doom?
Lor. I crave no better than your grace awards.
Hor. Nor I, although I sit beside my right.
King. Then by my judgment, thus your strife shall end:
You both deserve, and both shall have reward.
Nephew, thou took'st his weapon and his horse:
His weapons and his horse are thy reward.
Horatio, thou didst force him first to yield:
His ransom therefore is thy valour's fee;
Appoint the sum, as you shall both agree.
But, nephew, thou shalt have the prince in guard,
For thine estate best fitteth such a guest:
Horatio's house were small for all his train.
Yet, in regard thy substance passeth his,
And that just guerdon may befall desert,
To him we yield the armour of the prince.
How likes Don Balthazar of this device?
Bal. Right well, my liege, if this proviso were,
That Don Horatio bear us company,
Whom I admire and love for chivalry.
King. Horatio, leave him not that loves thee so.—
Now let us hence to see our soldiers paid,
And feast our prisoner as our friendly guest.
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene III.]

(*Enter* Viceroy, Alexandro, Villuppo.)

Vic. Is our ambassador despatch'd for Spain?
Alex. Two days, my liege, are past since his depart.
Vic. And tribute-payment gone along with him?
Alex. Ay, my good lord.
Vic. Then rest we here awhile in our unrest,
And feed our sorrows with some inward sighs,
For deepest cares break never into tears.
But wherefore sit I in a regal throne?
This better fits a wretch's endless moan.
(*Falls to the ground.*)
Yet this is higher than my fortunes reach,
And therefore better than my state deserves.
Ay, ay, this earth, image of melancholy,
Seeks him whom fates adjudge to misery.
Here let me lie; now am I at the lowest.
Qui jacet in terra, non habet unde cadat.
In me consumpsit vires fortuna nocendo;
Nil superest ut jam possit obesse magis.
Yes, Fortune may bereave me of my crown:
Here, take it now;— let Fortune do her worst,
She will not rob me of this sable weed.
O no, she envies none but pleasant things.
Such is the folly of despiteful chance!
Fortune is blind, and sees not my deserts;
So is she deaf, and hears not my laments;
And could she hear, yet is she wilful-mad,
And therefore will not pity my distress.
Suppose that she could pity me, what then?
What help can be expected at her hands
Whose foot [is] standing on a rolling stone,
And mind more mutable than fickle winds?
Why wail I, then, where's hope of no redress?
O yes, complaining makes my grief seem less.
My late ambition hath distain'd my faith;
My breach of faith occasion'd bloody wars;
Those bloody wars have spent my treasury;
And with my treasury my people's blood;
And with their blood, my joy and best belov'd,
My best belov'd, my sweet and only son.
O, wherefore went I not to war myself?
The cause was mine; I might have died for both:
My years were mellow, his but young and green;

My death were natural, but his was forc'd.
Alex. No doubt, my liege, but still the prince survives.
Vic. Survives! Ay, where?
Alex. In Spain, a prisoner by mischance of war.
Vic. Then they have slain him for his father's fault.
Alex. That were a breach to common law of arms.
Vic. They reck no laws that meditate revenge.
Alex. His ransom's worth will stay from foul revenge.
Vic. No; if he liv'd, the news would soon be here.
Alex. Nay, evil news fly faster still than good.
Vic. Tell me no more of news, for he is dead.
Vil. My sovereign, pardon the author of ill news,
And I'll bewray the fortune of thy son.
Vic. Speak on, I'll guerdon thee, whate'er it be.
Mine ear is ready to receive ill news;
My heart grown hard 'gainst mischief's battery.
Stand up, I say, and tell thy tale at large.
Vil. Then hear that truth which these mine eyes have seen.
When both the armies were in battle join'd,
Don Balthazar, amidst the thickest troops,
To win renown did wondrous feats of arms.
Amongst the rest, I saw him, hand to hand,
In single fight with their lord-general;
Till Alexandro, that here counterfeits
Under the colour of a duteous friend,
Discharg'd his pistol at the prince's back
As though he would have slain their general:
But therewithal Don Balthazar fell down;
And when he fell, then we began to fly:
But, had he liv'd, the day had sure been ours.
Alex. O wicked forgery! O traitorous miscreant!
Vic. Hold thou thy peace! But now, Villuppo, say,
Where then became the carcase of my son?
Vil. I saw them drag it to the Spanish tents.
Vic. Ay, ay, my nightly dreams have told me this.—
Thou false, unkind, unthankful, traitorous beast,
Wherein had Balthazar offended thee,
That thou shouldst thus betray him to our foes?
Was't Spanish gold that bleared so thine eyes
That thou couldst see no part of our deserts?
Perchance, because thou art Terceira's lord,
Thou hadst some hope to wear this diadem,
If first my son and then myself were slain;
But thy ambitious thought shall break thy neck.
Ay, this was it that made thee spill his blood;
(*Takes the crown and puts it on again.*)
But I'll now wear it till thy blood be spilt.
Alex. Vouchsafe, dread sovereign, to hear me speak.
Vic. Away with him! His sight is second hell.
Keep him till we determine of his death:
[*They take him out.*]
If Balthazar be dead, he shall not live.
Villuppo, follow us for thy reward.
(*Exit Viceroy.*)
Vil. Thus have I with an envious, forged tale
Deceiv'd the king, betray'd mine enemy,
And hope for guerdon of my villany.
(*Exit.*)

[Scene IV.]

(*Enter* Horatio *and* Bel-imperia.)

Bel. Signior Horatio, this is the place and hour,
Wherein I must entreat thee to relate
The circumstance of Don Andrea's death,
Who, living, was my garland's sweetest flower,
And in his death hath buried my delights.
Hor. For love of him and service to yourself,
I nill refuse this heavy doleful charge;
Yet tears and sighs, I fear, will hinder me.

When both our armies were enjoin'd in fight,
Your worthy chevalier amidst the thick'st,
For glorious cause still aiming at the fairest,
Was at the last by young Don Balthazar
Encount'red hand to hand. Their fight was long,
Their hearts were great, their clamours menacing,
Their strength alike, their strokes both dangerous.
But wrathful Nemesis, that wicked power,
Envying at Andrea's praise and worth,
Cut short his life, to end his praise and worth.
She, she herself, disguis'd in armour's mask —
As Pallas was before proud Pergamus —
Brought in a fresh supply of halberdiers,
Which paunch'd his horse, and ding'd him to the ground.
Then young Don Balthazar with ruthless rage,
Taking advantage of his foe's distress,
Did finish what his halberdiers begun,
And left not, till Andrea's life was done.
Then, though too late, incens'd with just remorse,
I with my band set forth against the prince,
And brought him prisoner from his halberdiers.

Bel. Would thou hadst slain him that so slew my love!
But then was Don Andrea's carcase lost?

Hor. No, that was it for which I chiefly strove,
Nor stepp'd I back till I recover'd him.
I took him up, and wound him in mine arms;
And wielding him unto my private tent,
There laid him down, and dew'd him with my tears,
And sigh'd and sorrowed as became a friend.
But neither friendly sorrow, sighs, nor tears
Could win pale Death from his usurped right.
Yet this I did, and less I could not do:
I saw him honoured with due funeral.
This scarf I pluck'd from off his lifeless arm,
And wear it in remembrance of my friend.

Bel. I know the scarf: would he had kept it still!
For had he liv'd, he would have kept it still,
And worn it for his Bel-imperia's sake;
For 'twas my favour at his last depart.
But now wear thou it both for him and me;
For after him thou hast deserv'd it best.
But for thy kindness in his life and death,
Be sure, while Bel-imperia's life endures,
She will be Don Horatio's thankful friend.

Hor. And, madam, Don Horatio will not slack
Humbly to serve fair Bel-imperia,
But now, if your good liking stand thereto,
I'll crave your pardon to go seek the prince;
For so the duke, your father, gave me charge.

Bel. Ay, go, Horatio, leave me here alone;
For solitude best fits my cheerless mood.
(*Exit* Horatio.)
Yet what avails to wail Andrea's death,
From whence Horatio proves my second love?
Had he not lov'd Andrea as he did,
He could not sit in Bel-imperia's thoughts.
But how can love find harbour in my breast
Till I revenge the death of my belov'd?
Yes, second love shall further my revenge!
I'll love Horatio, my Andrea's friend,
The more to spite the prince that wrought his end;
And where Don Balthazar, that slew my love,
Himself now pleads for favour at my hands,
He shall, in rigour of my just disdain,
Reap long repentance for his murderous deed.
For what was't else but murderous cowardice,
So many to oppress one valiant knight,
Without respect of honour in the fight?
And here he comes that murd'red my delight.

(*Enter* Lorenzo *and* Balthazar.)

Lor. Sister, what means this melancholy walk?

Bel. That for a while I wish no company.

Lor. But here the prince is come to visit you.

Bel. That argues that he lives in liberty.
Bal. No, madam, but in pleasing servitude.
Bel. Your prison then, belike, is your conceit.
Bal. Ay, by conceit my freedom is enthrall'd.
Bel. Then with conceit enlarge yourself again.
Bal. What, if conceit have laid my heart to gage?
Bel. Pay that you borrowed, and recover it.
Bal. I die, if it return from whence it lies.
Bel. A heartless man, and live? A miracle!
Bal. Ay, lady, love can work such miracles.
Lor. Tush, tush, my lord! let go these ambages,
And in plain terms acquaint her with your love.
Bel. What boots complaint, when there's no remedy?
Bal. Yes, to your gracious self must I complain,
In whose fair answer lies my remedy,
On whose perfection all my thoughts attend,
On whose aspect mine eyes find beauty's bower,
In whose translucent breast my heart is lodg'd.
Bel. Alas, my lord, these are but words of course,
And but devis'd to drive me from this place.

(*She, in going in, lets fall her glove, which* Horatio, *coming out, takes up.*)

Hor. Madam, your glove.
Bel. Thanks, good Horatio; take it for thy pains.
Bal. Signior Horatio stoop'd in happy time!
Hor. I reap'd more grace than I deserv'd or hop'd.
Lor. My lord, be not dismay'd for what is past:
You know that women oft are humorous.
These clouds will overblow with little wind;
Let me alone, I'll scatter them myself.
Meanwhile, let us devise to spend the time
In some delightful sports and revelling.
Hor. The king, my lords, is coming hither straight,
To feast the Portingal ambassador;
Things were in readiness before I came.
Bal. Then here it fits us to attend the king,
To welcome hither our ambassador,
And learn my father and my country's health.

[Scene V.]

(*Enter the Banquet, Trumpets, the* King, *and* Ambassador.)

King. See, lord Ambassador, how Spain entreats
Their prisoner Balthazar, thy viceroy's son.
We pleasure more in kindness than in wars.
Amb. Sad is our king, and Portingale laments,
Supposing that Don Balthazar is slain.
Bal. So am I! — slain by beauty's tyranny.
You see, my lord, how Balthazar is slain:
I frolic with the Duke of Castile's son,
Wrapp'd every hour in pleasures of the court,
And grac'd with favours of his majesty.
King. Put off your greetings, till our feast be done;
Now come and sit with us, and taste our cheer. (*Sit to the banquet.*)
Sit down, young prince, you are our second guest;
Brother, sit down; and, nephew, take your place.
Signior Horatio, wait thou upon our cup;
For well thou hast deserved to be honoured.
Now, lordings, fall to; Spain is Portugal,
And Portugal is Spain: we both are friends;
Tribute is paid, and we enjoy our right.
But where is old Hieronimo, our marshal?
He promis'd us, in honour of our guest,
To grace our banquet with some pompous jest.

(*Enter* Hieronimo, *with a drum, three knights, each his scutcheon; then he fetches three kings; they take their crowns and them captive.*)

Hieronimo, this masque contents mine eye,
Although I sound not well the mystery.
Hier. The first arm'd knight, that hung his scutcheon up,
(*He takes the scutcheon and gives it to the* King.)
Was English Robert, Earl of Gloucester,
Who, when King Stephen bore sway in Albion,
Arriv'd with five and twenty thousand men
In Portingale, and by success of war
Enforc'd the king, then but a Saracen,
To bear the yoke of the English monarchy.
King. My lord of Portingale, by this you see
That which may comfort both your king and you,
And make your late discomfort seem the less.
But say, Hieronimo, what was the next?
Hier. The second knight, that hung his scutcheon up.
(*He doth as he did before.*)
Was Edmund, Earl of Kent in Albion,
When English Richard wore the diadem.
He came likewise, and razed Lisbon walls,
And took the King of Portingale in fight;
For which and other such-like service done
He after was created Duke of York.
King. This is another special argument,
That Portingale may deign to bear our yoke,
When it by little England hath been yok'd.
But now, Hieronimo, what were the last?
Hier. The third and last, not least, in our account, (*Doing as before.*)
Was, as the rest, a valiant Englishman,
Brave John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster,
As by his scutcheon plainly may appear.
He with a puissant army came to Spain,
And took our King of Castile prisoner.
Amb. This is an argument for our viceroy
That Spain may not insult for her success,
Since English warriors likewise conquered Spain,
And made them bow their knees to Albion.
King. Hieronimo, I drink to thee for this device,
Which hath pleas'd both the ambassador and me:
Pledge me, Hieronimo, if thou love the king. (*Takes the cup of Horatio.*)
My lord, I fear we sit but over-long,
Unless our dainties were more delicate;
But welcome are you to the best we have.
Now let us in, that you may be despatch'd:
I think our council is already set.
(*Exeunt omnes.*)

[Chorus.]

Andrea. Come we for this from depth of underground,
To see him feast that gave me my death's wound?
These pleasant sights are sorrow to my soul:
Nothing but league, and love, and banqueting?
Revenge. Be still, Andrea; ere we go from hence,
I'll turn their friendship into fell despite,
Their love to mortal hate, their day to night,
Their hope into despair, their peace to war,
Their joys to pain, their bliss to misery.

ACT II

[Scene I.]

(*Enter* Lorenzo *and* Balthazar.)

Lor. My lord, though Bel-imperia seem thus coy,
Let reason hold you in your wonted joy.
In time the savage bull sustains the yoke,
In time all haggard hawks will stoop to lure,
In time small wedges cleave the hardest oak,
In time the flint is pierc'd with softest shower,
And she in time will fall from her disdain,
And rue the sufferance of your friendly pain.
Bal. No, she is wilder, and more hard withal,
Than beast, or bird, or tree, or stony wall.

But wherefore blot I Bel-imperia's name?
It is my fault, not she, that merits blame.
My feature is not to content her sight,
My words are rude and work her no delight.
The lines I send her are but harsh and ill,
Such as do drop from Pan and Marsyas' quill.
My presents are not of sufficient cost,
And being worthless, all my labour's lost.
Yet might she love me for my valiancy:
Ay, but that's sland'red by captivity.
Yet might she love me to content her sire:
Ay, but her reason masters his desire.
Yet might she love me as her brother's friend:
Ay, but her hopes aim at some other end.
Yet might she love me to uprear her state:
Ay, but perhaps she hopes some nobler mate.
Yet might she love me as her beauty's thrall:
Ay, but I fear she cannot love at all.

Lor. My lord, for my sake leave this ecstasy,
And doubt not but we'll find some remedy.
Some cause there is that lets you not be lov'd;
First that must needs be known, and then remov'd.
What, if my sister love some other knight?

Bal. My summer's day will turn to winter's night.

Lor. I have already found a stratagem
To sound the bottom of this doubtful theme.
My lord, for once you shall be rul'd by me;
Hinder me not, whate'er you hear or see.
By force or fair means will I cast about
To find the truth of all this question out.
Ho, Pedringano!

Ped. *Signior!*

Lor. *Vien qui presto.*

(*Enter* Pedringano.)

Ped. Hath your lordship any service to command me?

Lor. Ay, Pedringano, service of import;
And — not to spend the time in trifling words —
Thus stands the case: it is not long, thou know'st,
Since I did shield thee from my father's wrath,
For thy conveyance in Andrea's love,
For which thou wert adjudg'd to punishment.
I stood betwixt thee and thy punishment,
And since, thou knowest how I have favoured thee.
Now to these favours will I add reward,
Not with fair words, but store of golden coin,
And lands and living join'd with dignities,
If thou but satisfy my just demand.
Tell truth, and have me for thy lasting friend.

Ped. Whate'er it be your lordship shall demand,
My bounden duty bids me tell the truth,
If case it lie in me to tell the truth.

Lor. Then, Pedringano, this is my demand:
Whom loves my sister Bel-imperia?
For she reposeth all her trust in thee.
Speak, man, and gain both friendship and reward:
I mean, whom loves she in Andrea's place?

Ped. Alas, my lord, since Don Andrea's death
I have no credit with her as before,
And therefore know not, if she love or no.

Lor. Nay, if thou dally, then I am thy foe, (*Draws his sword.*)
And fear shall force what friendship cannot win.
Thy death shall bury what thy life conceals;
Thou diest for more esteeming her than me.

Ped. O, stay, my lord!

Lor. Yet speak the truth, and I will guerdon thee,
And shield thee from whatever can ensue,
And will conceal whate'er proceeds from thee.
But if thou dally once again, thou diest.

Ped. If madam Bel-imperia be in love —

Lor. What, villain! Ifs and ands? (*Offers to kill him.*)

Ped. O, stay, my lord! She loves Horatio. (Balthazar *starts back.*)

Lor. What, Don Horatio, our knight marshal's son?

Ped. Even him, my lord.

Lor. Now say but how know'st thou he is her love,
And thou shalt find me kind and liberal.
Stand up, I say, and fearless tell the truth.
Ped. She sent him letters, which myself perus'd,
Full-fraught with lines and arguments of love,
Preferring him before Prince Balthazar.
Lor. Swear on this cross that what thou say'st is true,
And that thou wilt conceal what thou hast told.
Ped. I swear to both, by him that made us all.
Lor. In hope thine oath is true, here's thy reward;
But if I prove thee perjur'd and unjust,
This very sword whereon thou took'st thine oath
Shall be the worker of thy tragedy.
Ped. What I have said is true, and shall — for me —
Be still conceal'd from Bel-imperia.
Besides, your honour's liberality
Deserves my duteous service, even till death.
Lor. Let this be all that thou shalt do for me:
Be watchful when and where these lovers meet,
And give me notice in some secret sort.
Ped. I will, my lord.
Lor. Then shalt thou find that I am liberal.
Thou know'st that I can more advance thy state
Than she; be therefore wise, and fail me not.
Go and attend her, as thy custom is,
Lest absence make her think thou dost amiss. (*Exit* Pedringano.)
Why so: *tam armis quam ingenio:*
Where words prevail not, violence prevails;
But gold doth more than either of them both.
How likes Prince Balthazar this stratagem?
Bal. Both well and ill; it makes me glad and sad:
Glad, that I know the hinderer of my love;
Sad, that I fear she hates me whom I love:
Glad, that I know on whom to be reveng'd;
Sad, that she'll fly me, if I take revenge.
Yet must I take revenge, or die myself,
For love resisted grows impatient.
I think Horatio be my destin'd plague:
First, in his hand he brandished a sword,
And with that sword he fiercely waged war,
And in that war he gave me dangerous wounds,
And by those wounds he forced me to yield,
And by my yielding I became his slave.
Now in his mouth he carries pleasing words,
Which pleasing words do harbour sweet conceits,
Which sweet conceits are lim'd with sly deceits,
Which sly deceits smooth Bel-imperia's ears,
And through her ears dive down into her heart,
And in her heart set him, where I should stand.
Thus hath he ta'en my body by his force,
And now by sleight would captivate my soul;
But in his fall I'll tempt the destinies,
And either lose my life, or win my love.
Lor. Let's go, my lord; your staying stays revenge.
Do you but follow me, and gain your love:
Her favour must be won by his remove.
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Horatio *and* Bel-imperia.)

Hor. Now, madam, since by favour of your love
Our hidden smoke is turn'd to open flame,
And that with looks and words we feed our thought
(Two chief contents, where more cannot be had);
Thus, in the midst of love's fair blandishments,
Why show you sign of inward languishments,
(Pedringano *showeth all to the* Prince *and* Lorenzo, *placing them in secret.*)
Bel. My heart, sweet friend, is like a ship at sea:

She wisheth port, where, riding all at ease,
She may repair what stormy times have worn,
And leaning on the shore, may sing with joy
That pleasure follows pain, and bliss annoy.
Possession of thy love is th' only port,
Wherein my heart, with fears and hopes long toss'd,
Each hour doth wish and long to make resort,
There to repair the joys that it hath lost,
And, sitting safe, to sing in Cupid's choir
That sweetest bliss is crown of love's desire.
(BALTHAZAR *and* LORENZO *above.*)
BAL. O sleep, mine eyes, see not my love profan'd;
Be deaf, my ears, hear not my discontent;
Die, heart; another joys what thou deserv'st.
LOR. Watch still, mine eyes, to see this love disjoin'd;
Hear still, mine ears, to hear them both lament;
Live, heart, to joy at fond Horatio's fall.
BEL. Why stands Horatio speechless all this while?
HOR. The less I speak, the more I meditate.
BEL. But whereon dost thou chiefly meditate?
HOR. On dangers past, and pleasures to ensue.
BAL. On pleasures past, and dangers to ensue.
BEL. What dangers and what pleasures dost thou mean?
HOR. Dangers of war, and pleasures of our love.
LOR. Dangers of death, but pleasures none at all.
BEL. Let dangers go, thy war shall be with me:
But such a war as breaks no bond of peace.
Speak thou fair words, I'll cross them with fair words;
Send thou sweet looks, I'll meet them with sweet looks;
Write loving lines, I'll answer loving lines;
Give me a kiss, I'll countercheck thy kiss:
Be this our warring peace, or peaceful war.
HOR. But, gracious madam, then appoint the field,
Where trial of this war shall first be made.
BAL. Ambitious villain, how his boldness grows!
BEL. Then be thy father's pleasant bower the field,
Where first we vow'd a mutual amity:
The court were dangerous, that place is safe.
Our hour shall be, when Vesper 'gins to rise,
That summons home distressful travellers.
There none shall hear us but the harmless birds;
Haply the gentle nightingale
Shall carol us asleep, ere we be ware,
And, singing with the prickle at her breast,
Tell our delight and mirthful dalliance.
Till then each hour will seem a year and more.
HOR. But, honey-sweet and honourable love,
Return we now into your father's sight;
Dangerous suspicion waits on our delight.
LOR. Ay, danger mixed with jealous despite
Shall send thy soul into eternal night.
(*Exeunt.*)

[SCENE III.]

(*Enter* KING OF SPAIN, PORTINGALE AMBASSADOR, DON CYPRIAN, *etc.*)

KING. Brother of Castile, to the prince's love
What says your daughter Bel-imperia?
CYP. Although she coy it, as becomes her kind,
And yet dissemble that she loves the prince,
I doubt not, I, but she will stoop in time.
And were she froward, which she will not be,
Yet herein shall she follow my advice,
Which is to love him, or forgo my love.
KING. Then, lord Ambassador of Portingale,
Advise thy king to make this marriage up,
For strengthening of our late-confirmed league;
I know no better means to make us friends.
Her dowry shall be large and liberal;

Besides that she is daughter and half-heir
Unto our brother here, Don Cyprian,
And shall enjoy the moiety of his land,
I'll grace her marriage with an uncle's gift,
And this it is, in case the match go forward:
The tribute which you pay, shall be releas'd;
And if by Balthazar she have a son,
He shall enjoy the kingdom after us.
Amb. I'll make the motion to my sovereign liege,
And work it, if my counsel may prevail.
King. Do so, my lord, and if he give consent,
I hope his presence here will honour us,
In celebration of the nuptial day;
And let himself determine of the time.
Amb. Will't please your grace command me aught beside?
King. Commend me to the king, and so farewell.
But where's Prince Balthazar to take his leave?
Amb. That is perform'd already, my good lord.
King. Amongst the rest of what you have in charge,
The prince's ransom must not be forgot:
That's none of mine, but his that took him prisoner;
And well his forwardness deserves reward.
It was Horatio, our knight marshal's son.
Amb. Between us there's a price already pitch'd,
And shall be sent with all convenient speed.
King. Then once again farewell, my lord.
Amb. Farewell, my lord of Castile, and the rest. (*Exit.*)
King. Now, brother, you must take some little pains
To win fair Bel-imperia from her will.
Young virgins must be ruled by their friends.
The prince is amiable, and loves her well;
If she neglect him and forgo his love,
She both will wrong her own estate and ours.
Therefore, whiles I do entertain the prince
With greatest pleasure that our court affords,
Endeavour you to win your daughter's thought:
If she give back, all this will come to naught. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene IV.]

(*Enter* Horatio, Bel-imperia, *and* Pedringano.)

Hor. Now that the night begins with sable wings
To overcloud the brightness of the sun,
And that in darkness pleasures may be done:
Come, Bel-imperia, let us to the bower,
And there in safety pass a pleasant hour.
Bel. I follow thee, my love, and will not back,
Although my fainting heart controls my soul.
Hor. Why, make you doubt of Pedringano's faith?
Bel. No, he is as trusty as my second self.—
Go, Pedringano, watch without the gate,
And let us know if any make approach.
Ped. [*aside*]. Instead of watching, I'll deserve more gold
By fetching Don Lorenzo to this match.
(*Exit* Pedringano.)
Hor. What means thy love?
Bel. I know not what myself;
And yet my heart foretells me some mischance.
Hor. Sweet, say not so; fair fortune is our friend,
And heavens have shut up day to pleasure us.
The stars, thou see'st, hold back their twinkling shine,
And Luna hides herself to pleasure us.
Bel. Thou hast prevail'd; I'll conquer my misdoubt,
And in thy love and counsel drown my fear.
I fear no more; love now is all my thoughts.
Why sit we not? for pleasure asketh ease.
Hor. The more thou sitt'st within these leafy bowers,
The more will Flora deck it with her flowers.
Bel. Ay, but if Flora spy Horatio here,
Her jealous eye will think I sit too near.

Hor. Hark, madam, how the birds record by night,
For joy that Bel-imperia sits in sight.
Bel. No, Cupid counterfeits the nightingale,
To frame sweet music to Horatio's tale.
Hor. If Cupid sing, then Venus is not far:
Ay, thou art Venus, or some fairer star.
Bel. If I be Venus, thou must needs be Mars;
And where Mars reigneth, there must needs be wars.
Hor. Then thus begin our wars: put forth thy hand,
That it may combat with my ruder hand.
Bel. Set forth thy foot to try the push of mine.
Hor. But first my looks shall combat against thine.
Bel. Then ward thyself: I dart this kiss at thee.
Hor. Thus I retort the dart thou threw'st at me.
Bel. Nay, then to gain the glory of the field,
My twining arms shall yoke and make thee yield.
Hor. Nay, then my arms are large and strong withal:
Thus elms by vines are compass'd, till they fall.
Bel. O, let me go; for in my troubled eyes
Now may'st thou read that life in passion dies.
Hor. O, stay a while, and I will die with thee;
So shalt thou yield, and yet have conquer'd me.
Bel. Who's there? Pedringano? We are betray'd!

(*Enter* Lorenzo, Balthazar, Serberine, Pedringano, *disguised.*)

Lor. My lord, away with her, take her aside.—
O, sir, forbear: your valour is already tried.
Quickly despatch, my masters.
(*They hang him in the arbour.*)
Hor. What, will you murder me?
Lor. Ay, thus, and thus: these are the fruits of love. (*They stab him.*)
Bel. O, save his life, and let me die for him!
O, save him, brother; save him, Balthazar:
I lov'd Horatio; but he lov'd not me.
Bal. But Balthazar loves Bel-imperia.
Lor. Although his life were still ambitious, proud,
Yet is he at the highest now he is dead.
Bel. Murder! murder! Help, Hieronimo, help!
Lor. Come, stop her mouth; away with her. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter* Hieronimo *in his shirt, etc.*)

Hier. What outcries pluck me from my naked bed,
And chill my throbbing heart with trembling fear,
Which never danger yet could daunt before?
Who calls Hieronimo? Speak, here I am.
I did not slumber; therefore 'twas no dream.
No, no, it was some woman cried for help,
And here within this garden did she cry,
And in this garden must I rescue her.—
But stay, what murd'rous spectacle is this?
A man hang'd up and all the murderers gone!
And in my bower, to lay the guilt on me!
This place was made for pleasure, not for death. (*He cuts him down.*)
Those garments that he wears I oft have seen —
Alas, it is Horatio, my sweet son!
O no, but he that whilom was my son!
O, was it thou that call'dst me from my bed?
O speak, if any spark of life remain:
I am thy father; who hath slain my son?
What savage monster, not of human kind,
Hath here been glutted with thy harmless blood,
And left thy bloody corpse dishonoured here,
For me, amidst these dark and deathful shades,
To drown thee with an ocean of my tears?

O heavens, why made you night to cover sin?
By day this deed of darkness had not been.
O earth, why didst thou not in time devour
The vild profaner of this sacred bower?
O poor Horatio, what hadst thou misdone,
To leese thy life, ere life was new begun?
O wicked butcher, whatsoe'er thou wert,
How could thou strangle virtue and desert?
Ay me most wretched, that have lost my joy,
In leesing my Horatio, my sweet boy!

(*Enter* Isabella.)

Isab. My husband's absence makes my heart to throb: —
Hieronimo!
Hier. Here, Isabella, help me to lament;
For sighs are stopp'd, and all my tears are spent.
Isab. What world of grief! my son Horatio!
O, where's the author of this endless woe?
Hier. To know the author were some ease of grief.
For in revenge my heart would find relief.
Isab. Then is he gone? and is my son gone too?
O, gush out, tears, fountains and floods of tears;
Blow, sighs, and raise an everlasting storm;
For outrage fits our cursed wretchedness.
[*Ay me, Hieronimo, sweet husband, speak!*
Hier. *He supp'd with us to-night, frolic and merry,*
And said he would go visit Balthazar
At the duke's palace; there the prince doth lodge.
He had no custom to stay out so late:
He may be in his chamber; some go see.
Roderigo, ho!

(*Enter* Pedro *and* Jaques.)

Isab. *Ay me, he raves! — Sweet Hieronimo!*
Hier. *True, all Spain takes note of it.*
Besides, he is so generally belov'd;
His majesty the other day did grace him
With waiting on his cup: these be favours,
Which do assure me he cannot be short-liv'd.
Isab. *Sweet Hieronimo!*
Hier. *I wonder how this fellow got his clothes! —*
Sirrah, sirrah, I'll know the truth of all.
Jaques, run to the Duke of Castile's presently,
And bid my son Horatio to come home:
I and his mother have had strange dreams to-night.
Do ye hear me, sir?
Jaques. *Ay, sir.*
Hier. *Well, sir, be gone.*
Pedro, come hither; know'st thou who this is?
Ped. *Too well, sir.*
Hier. *Too well! Who, who is it? Peace, Isabella!*
Nay, blush not, man.
Ped. *It is my lord Horatio.*
Hier. *Ha, ha, St. James! but this doth make me laugh,*
That there are more deluded than myself.
Ped. *Deluded?*
Hier. *Ay:*
I would have sworn myself, within this hour,
That this had been my son Horatio:
His garments are so like.
Ha! are they not great persuasions?
Isab. *O, would to God it were not so!*
Hier. *Were not, Isabella? Dost thou dream it is?*
Can thy soft bosom entertain a thought
That such a black deed of mischief should be done
On one so pure and spotless as our son?
Away, I am ashamed.
Isab. *Dear Hieronimo,*
Cast a more serious eye upon thy grief;
Weak apprehension gives but weak belief.
Hier. *It was a man, sure, that was hang'd up here;*
A youth, as I remember: I cut him down.
If it should prove my son now after all —
Say you? say you? — Light! lend me a taper;
Let me look again. — O God!
Confusion, mischief, torment, death and hell,
Drop all your stings at once in my cold bosom,
That now is stiff with horror: kill me quickly!
Be gracious to me, thou infective night.
And drop this deed of murder down on me;
Gird in my waste of grief with thy large darkness,
And let me not survive to see the light
May put me in the mind I had a son.
Isab. *O sweet Horatio! O my dearest son!*

Hier. *How strangely had I lost my way to grief!*]
Sweet, lovely rose, ill-pluckt before thy time,
Fair, worthy son, not conquer'd, but betray'd,
I'll kiss thee now, for words with tears are stay'd.
Isab. And I'll close up the glasses of his sight,
For once these eyes were only my delight.
Hier. See'st thou this handkercher besmear'd with blood?
It shall not from me, till I take revenge.
See'st thou those wounds that yet are bleeding fresh?
I'll not entomb them, till I have reveng'd.
Then will I joy amidst my discontent;
Till then my sorrow never shall be spent.
Isab. The heavens are just; murder cannot be hid:
Time is the author both of truth and right.
And time will bring this treachery to light.
Hier. Meanwhile, good Isabella, cease thy plaints,
Or, at the least, dissemble them awhile:
So shall we sooner find the practice out,
And learn by whom all this was brought about.
Come, Isabel, now let us take him up,
(*They take him up.*)
And bear him in from out this cursed place.
I'll say his dirge; singing fits not this case.
O aliquis mihi quas pulchrum ver educat herbas,
(Hieronimo *sets his breast unto his sword.*)
Misceat, et nostro detur medicina dolori;
Aut, si qui faciunt annorum oblivia, succos
Praebeat; ipse metam magnum quaecunque per orbem
Gramina Sol pulchras effert in luminis oras;
Ipse bibam quicquid meditatur saga veneni,
Quicquid et herbarum vi caeca nenia nectit:
Omnia perpetiar, lethum quoque, dum semel omnis
Noster in extincto moriatur pectore sensus.—
Ergo tuos oculos nunquam, mea vita, videbo,
Et tua perpetuus sepelivit lumina somnus?
Emoriar tecum: sic, juvat ire sub umbras.—
At tamen absistam properato cedere letho,
Ne mortem vindicta tuam tam nulla sequatur.
(*Here he throws it from him and bears the body away.*)

[Chorus.]

Andrea. Brought'st thou me hither to increase my pain?
I look'd that Balthazar should have been slain;
But 'tis my friend Horatio that is slain,
And they abuse fair Bel-imperia,
On whom I doted more than all the world,
Because she lov'd me more than all the world.
Revenge. Thou talk'st of harvest, when the corn is green:
The end is crown of every work well done;
The sickle comes not, till the corn be ripe.
Be still; and ere I lead thee from this place,
I'll show thee Balthazar in heavy case.

ACT III

[Scene I.]

(*Enter* Viceroy of Portingale, *Nobles,* Alexandro, Villuppo.)

Vic. Infortunate condition of kings,
Seated amidst so many helpless doubts!
First we are plac'd upon extremest height,
And oft supplanted with exceeding hate,
But ever subject to the wheel of chance;
And at our highest never joy we so
As we both doubt and dread our overthrow.
So striveth not the waves with sundry winds
As Fortune toileth in the affairs of kings,
That would be fear'd, yet fear to be belov'd,
Sith fear or love to kings is flattery.
For instance, lordings, look upon your king,
By hate deprived of his dearest son,
The only hope of our successive line.
Nob. I had not thought that Alexandro's heart
Had been envenom'd with such extreme hate;
But now I see that words have several works,
And there's no credit in the countenance.

Vil. No; for, my lord, had you beheld the train
That feigned love had colour'd in his looks,
When he in camp consorted Balthazar,
Far more inconstant had you thought the sun,
That hourly coasts the centre of the earth,
Than Alexandro's purpose to the prince.
Vic. No more, Villuppo, thou hast said enough,
And with thy words thou slay'st our wounded thoughts.
Nor shall I longer dally with the world,
Procrastinating Alexandro's death.
Go some of you, and fetch the traitor forth,
That, as he is condemned, he may die.

(*Enter* Alexandro *with a Nobleman and halberts.*)

Nob. In such extremes will nought but patience serve.
Alex. But in extremes what patience shall I use?
Nor discontents it me to leave the world,
With whom there nothing can prevail but wrong.
Nob. Yet hope the best.
Alex. 'Tis heaven is my hope.
As for the earth, it is too much infect
To yield me hope of any of her mould.
Vic. Why linger ye? Bring forth that daring fiend,
And let him die for his accursed deed.
Alex. Not that I fear the extremity of death
(For nobles cannot stoop to servile fear)
Do I, O king, thus discontented live.
But this, O this, torments my labouring soul,
That thus I die suspected of a sin
Whereof, as heav'ns have known my secret thoughts,
So am I free from this suggestion.
Vic. No more, I say! to the tortures! When?
Bind him, and burn his body in those flames, (*They bind him to a stake.*)
That shall prefigure those unquenched fires
Of Phlegethon, prepared for his soul.
Alex. My guiltless death will be aveng'd on thee,
On thee, Villuppo, that hath malic'd thus,
Or for thy meed hast falsely me accus'd.
Vil. Nay, Alexandro, if thou menace me,
I'll lend a hand to send thee to the lake
Where those thy words shall perish with thy works,
Injurious traitor! monstrous homicide!

(*Enter* Ambassador.)

Amb. Stay, hold a while;
And here — with pardon of his majesty —
Lay hands upon Villuppo.
Vic. Ambassador,
What news hath urg'd this sudden entrance?
Amb. Know, sovereign lord, that Balthazar doth live.
Vic. What say'st thou? Liveth Balthazar our son?
Amb. Your highness' son, Lord Balthazar, doth live;
And, well entreated in the court of Spain,
Humbly commends him to your majesty.
These eyes beheld; and these my followers,
With these, the letters of the king's commends, (*Gives him letters.*)
Are happy witnesses of his highness' health.
(*The King looks on the letters, and proceeds.*)
Vic. "Thy son doth live, your tribute is receiv'd;
Thy peace is made, and we are satisfied.
The rest resolve upon as things propos'd
For both our honours and thy benefit."
Amb. These are his highness' farther articles. (*He gives him more letters.*)
Vic. Accursed wretch, to intimate these ills
Against the life and reputation
Of noble Alexandro! Come, my lord, unbind him. —
Let him unbind thee, that is bound to death,
To make a quital for thy discontent.
(*They unbind him.*)
Alex. Dread lord, in kindness you could do no less
Upon report of such a damned fact;
But thus we see our innocence hath sav'd
The hopeless life which thou, Villuppo, sought
By thy suggestions to have massacred.

Vic. Say, false Villuppo, wherefore didst thou thus
Falsely betray Lord Alexandro's life?
Him whom thou know'st that no unkindness else
But even the slaughter of our dearest son
Could once have mov'd us to have misconceiv'd.
Alex. Say, treacherous Villuppo, tell the king:
Wherein hath Alexandro us'd thee ill?
Vil. Rent with remembrance of so foul a deed,
My guilty soul submits me to thy doom;
For not for Alexandro's injuries,
But for reward and hope to be preferr'd,
Thus have I shamelessly hazarded his life.
Vic. Which, villain, shall be ransom'd with thy death;
And not so mean a torment as we here
Devis'd for him who, thou said'st, slew our son,
But with the bitt'rest torments and extremes
That may be yet invented for thine end.
(Alexandro *seems to entreat.*)
Entreat me not; go, take the traitor hence:
(*Exit* Villuppo.)
And, Alexandro, let us honour thee
With public notice of thy loyalty. —
To end those things articulated here
By our great lord, the mighty King of Spain,
We with our council will deliberate.
Come, Alexandro, keep us company.
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Hieronimo.)

Hier. O eyes! no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears;
O life! no life, but lively form of death;
O world! no world, but mass of public wrongs,
Confus'd and fill'd with murder and misdeeds!
O sacred heav'ns! if this unhallowed deed,
If this inhuman and barbarous attempt,
If this incomparable murder thus
Of mine, but now no more my son,
Shall unreveal'd and unrevenged pass,
How should we term your dealings to be just,
If you unjustly deal with those that in your justice trust?
The night, sad secretary to my moans,
With direful visions wake my vexed soul,
And with the wounds of my distressful son
Solicit me for notice of his death.
The ugly fiends do sally forth of hell,
And frame my steps to unfrequented paths,
And fear my heart with fierce inflamed thoughts.
The cloudy day my discontents records,
Early begins to register my dreams,
And drive me forth to seek the murderer.
Eyes, life, world, heav'ns, hell, night, and day,
See, search, shew, send some man, some mean, that may — (*A letter falleth.*)
What's here? a letter? Tush! it is not so! —
A letter written to Hieronimo. (*Red ink.*)
"For want of ink, receive this bloody writ.
Me hath my hapless brother hid from thee;
Revenge thyself on Balthazar and him:
For these were they that murdered thy son.
Hieronimo, revenge Horatio's death,
And better fare than Bel-imperia doth."
What means this unexpected miracle?
My son slain by Lorenzo and the prince!
What cause had they Horatio to malign?
Or what might move thee, Bel-imperia,
To accuse thy brother, had he been the mean?
Hieronimo, beware! — thou art betray'd,
And to entrap thy life this train is laid.
Advise thee therefore, be not credulous:
This is devised to endanger thee,
That thou, by this, Lorenzo shouldst accuse;
And he, for thy dishonour done, should draw
Thy life in question and thy name in hate.
Dear was the life of my beloved son,
And of his death behoves me be reveng'd;
Then hazard not thine own, Hieronimo,
But live t' effect thy resolution.
I therefore will by circumstances try,
What I can gather to confirm this writ;
And, heark'ning near the Duke of Castile's house,
Close, if I can, with Bel-imperia,
To listen more, but nothing to bewray.

(*Enter* PEDRINGANO.)

Now, Pedringano!
PED. Now, Hieronimo!
HIER. Where's the lady?
PED. I know not; here's my lord.

(*Enter* LORENZO.)

LOR. How now, who's this? Hieronimo?
HIER. My lord.
PED. He asketh for my lady Bel-imperia.
LOR. What to do, Hieronimo? The duke, my father, hath
Upon some disgrace awhile remov'd her hence;
But, if it be ought I may inform her of,
Tell me, Hieronimo, and I'll let her know it.
HIER. Nay, nay, my lord, I thank you; it shall not need.
I had a suit unto her, but too late,
And her disgrace makes me unfortunate.
LOR. Why so, Hieronimo? Use me.
HIER. O no, lord, I dare not; it must not be.
I humbly thank your lordship.
[**HIER.** *Who? You, my lord?*
I reserve your favour for a greater honour;
This is a very toy, my lord, a toy.
LOR. *All's one, Hieronimo, acquaint me with it.*
HIER. *I' faith, my lord, it is an idle thing;*
I must confess I ha' been too slack, too tardy,
Too remiss unto your honour.
LOR. *How now, Hieronimo?*
HIER. *In troth, my lord, it is a thing of nothing:*
The murder of a son, or so —
A thing of nothing, my lord!]
LOR. Why then, farewell.
HIER. My grief no heart, my thoughts no tongue can tell. (*Exit.*)
LOR. Come hither, Pedringano, see'st thou this?
PED. My lord, I see it, and suspect it too.
LOR. This is that damned villain Serberine
That hath, I fear, reveal'd Horatio's death.
PED. My lord, he could not, 't was so lately done;
And since he hath not left my company.
LOR. Admit he have not, his condition's such,
As fear or flattering words may make him false.
I know his humour, and therewith repent
That e'er I us'd him in this enterprise.
But, Pedringano, to prevent the worst,
And 'cause I know thee secret as my soul,
Here, for thy further satisfaction, take thou this, (*Gives him more gold.*)
And hearken to me — thus it is devis'd:
This night thou must (and, prithee, so resolve),
Meet Serberine at Saint Luigi's Park —
Thou know'st 'tis here hard by behind the house;
There take thy stand, and see thou strike him sure,
For die he must, if we do mean to live.
PED. But how shall Serberine be there, my lord?
LOR. Let me alone; I'll send to him to meet
The prince and me, where thou must do this deed.
PED. It shall be done, my lord, it shall be done;
And I'll go arm myself to meet him there.
LOR. When things shall alter, as I hope they will,
Then shalt thou mount for this; thou know'st my mind.
(*Exit* PEDRINGANO.)
Che le Ieron!

(*Enter Page.*)

PAGE. My lord?
LOR. Go, sirrah,
To Serberine, and bid him forthwith meet
The prince and me at Saint Luigi's Park,
Behind the house; this evening, boy!
PAGE. I go, my lord.
LOR. But, sirrah, let the hour be eight o'clock:
Bid him not fail.
PAGE. I fly, my lord. (*Exit.*)
LOR. Now to confirm the complot thou hast cast
Of all these practices, I'll spread the watch,
Upon precise commandment from the king,

Strongly to guard the place where Pedringano
This night shall murder hapless Serberine.
Thus must we work that will avoid distrust;
Thus must we practise to prevent mishap,
And thus one ill another must expulse.
This sly enquiry of Hieronimo
For Bel-imperia breeds suspicion,
And this suspicion bodes a further ill.
As for myself, I know my secret fault,
And so do they; but I have dealt for them:
They that for coin their souls endangered,
To save my life, for coin shall venture theirs;
And better it's that base companions die
Than by their life to hazard our good haps.
Nor shall they live, for me to fear their faith:
I'll trust myself, myself shall be my friend;
For die they shall, —
Slaves are ordained to no other end. (*Exit.*)

[Scene III.]

(*Enter* Pedringano, *with a pistol.*)

Ped. Now, Pedringano, bid thy pistol hold,
And hold on, Fortune! once more favour me;
Give but success to mine attempting spirit,
And let me shift for taking of mine aim.
Here is the gold: this is the gold propos'd;
It is no dream that I adventure for,
But Pedringano is possess'd thereof.
And he that would not strain his conscience
For him that thus his liberal purse hath stretch'd,
Unworthy such a favour, may he fail,
And, wishing, want when such as I prevail.
As for the fear of apprehension,
I know, if need should be, my noble lord
Will stand between me and ensuing harms;
Besides, this place is free from all suspect:
Here therefore will I stay and take my stand.

(*Enter the Watch.*)

1 Watch. I wonder much to what intent it is
That we are thus expressly charg'd to watch.

2 Watch. 'Tis by commandment in the king's own name.

3 Watch. But we were never wont to watch and ward
So near the duke his brother's house before.

2 Watch. Content yourself, stand close, there's somewhat in 't.

(*Enter* Serberine.)

Ser. Here, Serberine, attend and stay thy pace;
For here did Don Lorenzo's page appoint
That thou by his command shouldst meet with him.
How fit a place — if one were so dispos'd —
Methinks this corner is to close with one.

Ped. Here comes the bird that I must seize upon.
Now, Pedringano, or never, play the man!

Ser. I wonder that his lordship stays so long,
Or wherefore should he send for me so late?

Ped. For this, Serberine! — and thou shalt ha 't. (*Shoots the dag.*)
So, there he lies; my promise is perform'd.

(*The Watch.*)

1 Watch. Hark, gentlemen, this is a pistol shot.

2 Watch. And here's one slain; — stay the murderer.

Ped. Now by the sorrows of the souls in hell, (*He strives with the Watch.*)
Who first lays hand on me, I'll be his priest.

3 Watch. Sirrah, confess, and therein play the priest,
Why hast thou thus unkindly kill'd the man?

Ped. Why? Because he walk'd abroad so late.

3 Watch. Come, sir, you had been better kept your bed,
Than have committed this misdeed so late.

2 Watch. Come, to the marshal's with the murderer!

1 Watch. On to Hieronimo's! help me here
To bring the murd'red body with us too.

Ped. Hieronimo? Carry me before whom you will.
Whate'er he be, I'll answer him and you;
And do your worst, for I defy you all.
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene IV.]

(*Enter* Lorenzo *and* Balthazar.)

Bal. How now, my lord, what makes you rise so soon?
Lor. Fear of preventing our mishaps too late.
Bal. What mischief is it that we not mistrust?
Lor. Our greatest ills we least mistrust, my lord,
And inexpected harms do hurt us most.
Bal. Why, tell me, Don Lorenzo, tell me, man,
If ought concerns our honour and your own.
Lor. Nor you, nor me, my lord, but both in one;
For I suspect — and the presumption's great —
That by those base confederates in our fault
Touching the death of Don Horatio,
We are betray'd to old Hieronimo.
Bal. Betray'd, Lorenzo? Tush! it cannot be.
Lor. A guilty conscience, urged with the thought
Of former evils, easily cannot err.
I am persuaded — and dissuade me not —
That all's revealed to Hieronimo.
And therefore know that I have cast it thus: — (*Enter Page.*)
But here's the page. How now? what news with thee?
Page. My lord, Serberine is slain.
Bal. Who? Serberine, my man?
Page. Your highness' man, my lord.
Lor. Speak, page, who murdered him?
Page. He that is apprehended for the fact.
Lor. Who?
Page. Pedringano.
Bal. Is Serberine slain, that lov'd his lord so well?
Injurious villain, murderer of his friend!
Lor. Hath Pedringano murdered Serberine?
My lord, let me entreat you to take the pains
To exasperate and hasten his revenge
With your complaints unto my lord the king.
This their dissension breed a greater doubt.
Bal. Assure thee, Don Lorenzo, he shall die,
Or else his highness hardly shall deny.
Meanwhile I'll haste the marshal-sessions,
For die he shall for this his damned deed.
(*Exit* Balthazar.)
Lor. Why so, this fits our former policy,
And thus experience bids the wise to deal.
I lay the plot; he prosecutes the point:
I set the trap; he breaks the worthless twigs,
And sees not that wherewith the bird was lim'd.
Thus hopeful men, that mean to hold their own,
Must look like fowlers to their dearest friends.
He runs to kill whom I have holp to catch,
And no man knows it was my reaching fetch.
'Tis hard to trust unto a multitude,
Or any one, in mine opinion,
When men themselves their secrets will reveal.

(*Enter a Messenger with a letter.*)

Boy!
Page. My lord.
Lor. What's he?
Mes. I have a letter to your lordship.
Lor. From whence?
Mes. From Pedringano that's imprison'd.
Lor. So he is in prison, then?
Mes. Ay, my good lord.
Lor. What would he with us? — He writes us here,
To stand good lord, and help him in distress. —
Tell him I have his letters, know his mind;
And what we may, let him assure him of.
Fellow, begone; my boy shall follow thee.
(*Exit Messenger.*)
This works like wax; yet once more try thy wits.
Boy, go, convey this purse to Pedringano;
Thou know'st the prison, closely give it him.

And be advis'd that none be there about.
Bid him be merry still, but secret;
And though the marshal-sessions be to-day,
Bid him not doubt of his delivery.
Tell him his pardon is already sign'd,
And thereon bid him boldly be resolv'd:
For, were he ready to be turned off —
As 'tis my will the uttermost be tried —
Thou with his pardon shalt attend him still.
Show him this box, tell him his pardon's in't;
But open't not, an if thou lov'st thy life,
But let him wisely keep his hopes unknown.
He shall not want while Don Lorenzo lives.
Away!
Page. I go, my lord, I run.
Lor. But, sirrah, see that this be cleanly done. (*Exit Page.*)
Now stands our fortune on a tickle point,
And now or never ends Lorenzo's doubts.
One only thing is uneffected yet,
And that's to see the executioner.
But to what end? I list not trust the air
With utterance of our pretence therein,
For fear the privy whisp'ring of the wind
Convey our words amongst unfriendly ears,
That lie too open to advantages.
E quel che voglio io, nessun lo sa;
Intendo io: quel mi basterà. (*Exit.*)

[Scene V.]

(*Enter Boy with the box.*)

Boy. My master hath forbidden me to look in this box; and, by my troth, 'tis likely, if he had not warned me, I should not have had so much idle time; for we men's-kind in our minority are like women in their uncertainty: that they are most forbidden, they will soonest attempt: so I now. — By my bare honesty, here's nothing but the bare empty box! Were it not sin against secrecy, I would say it were a piece of gentlemanlike knavery. I must go to Pedringano, and tell him his pardon is in this box; nay, I would have sworn it, had I not seen the contrary. I cannot choose but smile to think how the villain will flout the gallows, scorn the audience, and descant on the hangman, and all presuming of his pardon from hence. Will't not be an odd jest for me to stand and grace every jest he makes, pointing my finger at this box, as who would say, "Mock on, here's thy warrant." Is't not a scurvy jest that a man should jest himself to death? Alas! poor Pedringano, I am in a sort sorry for thee; but if I should be hanged with thee, I cannot weep. (*Exit.*)

[Scene VI.]

(*Enter* Hieronimo *and the Deputy.*)

Hier. Thus must we toil in other men's extremes,
That know not how to remedy our own;
And do them justice, when unjustly we,
For all our wrongs, can compass no redress.
But shall I never live to see the day,
That I may come, by justice of the heavens,
To know the cause that may my cares allay?
This toils my body, this consumeth age,
That only I to all men just must be,
And neither gods nor men be just to me.
Dep. Worthy Hieronimo, your office asks
A care to punish such as do transgress.
Hier. So is't my duty to regard his death
Who, when he liv'd, deserv'd my dearest blood.
But come, for that we came for: let's begin,
For here lies that which bids me to be gone.

(*Enter Officers, Boy, and* Pedringano, *with a letter in his hand, bound.*)

Dep. Bring forth the prisoner, for the court is set.
Ped. Gramercy, boy, but it was time to come;
For I had written to my lord anew
A nearer matter that concerneth him,
For fear his lordship had forgotten me.
But sith he hath rememb'red me so well —
Come, come, come on, when shall we to this gear?
Hier. Stand forth, thou monster, murderer of men,
And here, for satisfaction of the world,
Confess thy folly, and repent thy fault;
For there's thy place of execution.

Ped. This is short work. Well, to your marshalship
First I confess — nor fear I death therefore —
I am the man, ’twas I slew Serberine.
But sir, then you think this shall be the place,
Where we shall satisfy you for this gear?
Dep. Ay, Pedringano.
Ped. Now I think not so.
Hier. Peace, impudent; for thou shalt find it so;
For blood with blood shall, while I sit as judge,
Be satisfied, and the law discharg’d.
And though myself cannot receive the like,
Yet will I see that others have their right.
Despatch: the fault’s approved and confess’d,
And by our law he is condemn’d to die.
Hangm. Come on, sir, are you ready?
Ped. To do what, my fine, officious knave?
Hangm. To go to this gear.

Ped. O sir, you are too forward: thou wouldst fain furnish me with a halter, to disfurnish me of my habit. So I should go out of this gear, my raiment, into that gear, the rope. But, hangman, now I spy your knavery, I’ll not change without boot, that’s flat.

Hangm. Come, sir.
Ped. So, then, I must up?
Hangm. No remedy.
Ped. Yes, but there shall be for my coming down.
Hangm. Indeed, here’s a remedy for that.
Ped. How? Be turn’d off?

Hangm. Ay, truly. Come, are you ready? I pray sir, despatch; the day goes away.

Ped. What, do you hang by the hour? If you do, I may chance to break your old custom.

Hangm. Faith, you have reason; for I am like to break your young neck.

Ped. Dost thou mock me, hangman? Pray God, I be not preserved to break your knave’s pate for this.

Hangm. Alas, sir! you are a foot too low to reach it, and I hope you will never grow so high while I am in the office.

Ped. Sirrah, dost see yonder boy with the box in his hand?

Hangm. What, he that points to it with his finger?

Ped. Ay, that companion.

Hangm. I know him not; but what of him?

Ped. Dost thou think to live till his old doublet will make thee a new truss?

Hangm. Ay, and many a fair year after, to truss up many an honester man than either thou or he.

Ped. What hath he in his box, as thou think’st?

Hangm. Faith, I cannot tell, nor I care not greatly; methinks you should rather hearken to your soul’s health.

Ped. Why, sirrah, hangman, I take it that that is good for the body is likewise good for the soul: and it may be, in that box is balm for both.

Hangm. Well, thou art even the merriest piece of man’s flesh that e’er groan’d at my office door!

Ped. Is your roguery become an office with a knave’s name?

Hangm. Ay, and that shall all they witness that see you seal it with a thief’s name.

Ped. I prithee, request this good company to pray with me.

Hangm. Ay, marry, sir, this is a good motion. My masters, you see here’s a good fellow.

Ped. Nay, nay, now I remember me, let them alone till some other time; for now I have no great need.

Hier. I have not seen a wretch so impudent.
O monstrous times, where murder’s set so light,
And where the soul, that should be shrin’d in heaven,
Solely delights in interdicted things,
Still wand’ring in the thorny passages,
That intercepts itself of happiness.
Murder! O bloody monster! God forbid —
A fault so foul should ’scape unpunished.
Despatch, and see this execution done! —
This makes me to remember thee, my son.
(*Exit* Hieronimo.)

Ped. Nay, soft, no haste.
Dep. Why, wherefore stay you? Have you hope of life?
Ped. Why, ay!
Hangm. As how?
Ped. Why, rascal, by my pardon from the king.
Hangm. Stand you on that? Then you shall off with this. (*He turns him off.*)
Dep. So, executioner; — convey him hence;
But let his body be unburied:
Let not the earth be choked or infect
With that which heav'n contemns, and men neglect. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene VII.]

(*Enter* Hieronimo.)

Hier. Where shall I run to breathe abroad my woes,
My woes, whose weight hath wearied the earth?
Or mine exclaims, that have surcharg'd the air
With ceaseless plaints for my deceased son?
The blust'ring winds, conspiring with my words,
At my lament have mov'd the leafless trees,
Disrob'd the meadows of their flow'red green,
Made mountains marsh with spring-tides of my tears,
And broken through the brazen gates of hell.
Yet still tormented is my tortured soul
With broken sighs and restless passions,
That, winged, mount; and, hovering in the air,
Beat at the windows of the brightest heavens,
Soliciting for justice and revenge:
But they are plac'd in those empyreal heights,
Where, countermur'd with walls of diamond,
I find the place impregnable; and they
Resist my woes, and give my words no way.

(*Enter Hangman with a letter.*)

Hangm. O lord, sir! God bless you, sir! the man, sir, Petergade, sir, he that was so full of merry conceits —

Hier. Well, what of him?

Hangm. O lord, sir, he went the wrong way; the fellow had a fair commission to the contrary. Sir, here is his passport; I pray you, sir, we have done him wrong.

Hier. I warrant thee, give it me.
Hangm. You will stand between the gallows and me?
Hier. Ay, ay.
Hangm. I thank your lord worship.
(*Exit Hangman.*)
Hier. And yet, though somewhat nearer me concerns,
I will, to ease the grief that I sustain,
Take truce with sorrow while I read on this.
"My lord, I write, as mine extremes requir'd,
That you would labour my delivery:
If you neglect, my life is desperate,
And in my death I shall reveal the troth.
You know, my lord, I slew him for your sake,
And was confed'rate with the prince and you;
Won by rewards and hopeful promises,
I holp to murder Don Horatio too." —
Holp he to murder *mine* Horatio?
And actors in th' accursed tragedy
Wast thou, Lorenzo, Balthazar and thou,
Of whom my son, my son deserv'd so well?
What have I heard, what have mine eyes beheld?
O sacred heavens, may it come to pass
That such a monstrous and detested deed,
So closely smother'd, and so long conceal'd,
Shall thus by this be venged or reveal'd?
Now see I what I durst not then suspect,
That Bel-imperia's letter was not feign'd.
Nor feigned she, though falsely they have wrong'd
Both her, myself, Horatio, and themselves.
Now may I make compare 'twixt hers and this,
Of every accident I ne'er could find
Till now, and now I feelingly perceive
They did what heav'n unpunish'd would not leave.
O false Lorenzo! are these thy flattering looks?
Is this the honour that thou didst my son?
And Balthazar — bane to thy soul and me! —

Was this the ransom he reserv'd thee for?
Woe to the cause of these constrained wars!
Woe to thy baseness and captivity,
Woe to thy birth, thy body, and thy soul,
Thy cursed father, and thy conquer'd self!
And bann'd with bitter execrations be
The day and place where he did pity thee!
But wherefore waste I mine unfruitful words,
When nought but blood will satisfy my woes?
I will go plain me to my lord the king,
And cry aloud for justice through the court,
Wearing the flints with these my withered feet;
And either purchase justice by entreats,
Or tire them all with my revenging threats. (*Exit.*)

[Scene VIII.]

(*Enter* Isabella *and her Maid.*)

Isab. So that you say this herb will purge the eye,
And this, the head? —
Ah! — but none of them will purge the heart!
No, there's no medicine left for my disease,
Nor any physic to recure the dead.
(*She runs lunatic.*)
Horatio! O, where's Horatio?
Maid. Good madam, affright not thus yourself
With outrage for your son Horatio:
He sleeps in quiet in the Elysian fields.
Isab. Why, did I not give you gowns and goodly things,
Bought you a whistle and a whipstalk too,
To be revenged on their villanies?
Maid. Madam, these humours do torment my soul.
Isab. My soul — poor soul, thou talk'st of things
Thou know'st not what — my soul hath silver wings,
That mounts me up unto the highest heavens;
To heaven? Ay, there sits my Horatio,
Back'd with a troop of fiery Cherubins,
Dancing about his newly healed wounds,
Singing sweet hymns and chanting heav'nly notes,
Rare harmony to greet his innocence,
That died, ay died, a mirror in our days.
But say, where shall I find the men, the murderers,
That slew Horatio? Whither shall I run
To find them out that murdered my son?
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene IX.]

(Bel-imperia *at a window.*)

Bel. What means this outrage that is off'red me?
Why am I thus sequest'red from the court?
No notice! Shall I not know the cause
Of these my secret and suspicious ills?
Accursed brother, unkind murderer,
Why bend'st thou thus thy mind to martyr me?
Hieronimo, why writ I of thy wrongs,
Or why art thou so slack in thy revenge?
Andrea, O Andrea! that thou saw'st
Me for thy friend Horatio handled thus,
And him for me thus causeless murdered!—
Well, force perforce, I must constrain myself
To patience, and apply me to the time,
Till heaven, as I have hop'd, shall set me free.

(*Enter* Christophil.)

Chris. Come, madam Bel-imperia, this may not be. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene X.]

(*Enter* Lorenzo, Balthazar, *and the Page.*)

Lor. Boy, talk no further; thus far things go well.
Thou art assur'd that thou sawest him dead?
Page. Or else, my lord, I live not.
Lor. That's enough.
As for his resolution in his end,
Leave that to him with whom he sojourns now.
Here, take my ring and give it Christophil,
And bid him let my sister be enlarg'd,
And bring her hither straight.— (*Exit Page.*)
This that I did was for a policy,

To smooth and keep the murder secret,
Which, as a nine-days' wonder, being o'erblown,
My gentle sister will I now enlarge.
Bal. And time, Lorenzo: for my lord the duke,
You heard, enquired for her yester-night.
Lor. Why, and my lord, I hope you heard me say
Sufficient reason why she kept away;
But that's all one. My lord, you love her?
Bal. Ay.
Lor. Then in your love beware; deal cunningly:
Salve all suspicions, only soothe me up;
And if she hap to stand on terms with us —
As for her sweetheart and concealment so —
Jest with her gently: under feigned jest
Are things conceal'd that else would breed unrest.
But here she comes.

(*Enter* Bel-imperia.)

Now, sister, —
Bel. Sister? No!
Thou art no brother, but an enemy;
Else wouldst thou not have us'd thy sister so:
First, to affright me with thy weapons drawn,
And with extremes abuse my company;
And then to hurry me, like whirlwind's rage,
Amidst a crew of thy confederates,
And clap me up where none might come at me,
Nor I at any to reveal my wrongs.
What madding fury did possess thy wits?
Or wherein is't that I offended thee?
Lor. Advise you better, Bel-imperia,
For I have done you no disparagement;
Unless, by more discretion than deserv'd,
I sought to save your honour and mine own.
Bel. Mine honour? Why, Lorenzo, wherein is't
That I neglect my reputation so,
As you, or any, need to rescue it?
Lor. His highness and my father were resolv'd
To come confer with old Hieronimo
Concerning certain matters of estate
That by the viceroy was determined.
Bel. And wherein was mine honour touch'd in that?
Bal. Have patience, Bel-imperia; hear the rest.
Lor. Me, next in sight, as messenger they sent
To give him notice that they were so nigh:
Now when I came, consorted with the prince,
And unexpected in an arbour there
Found Bel-imperia with Horatio —
Bel. How then?
Lor. Why, then, remembering that old disgrace,
Which you for Don Andrea had endur'd,
And now were likely longer to sustain,
By being found so meanly accompanied,
Thought rather — for I knew no readier mean —
To thrust Horatio forth my father's way.
Bal. And carry you obscurely somewhere else,
Lest that his highness should have found you there.
Bel. Ev'n so, my lord? And you are witness
That this is true which he entreateth of?
You, gentle brother, forg'd this for my sake,
And you, my lord, were made his instrument?
A work of worth, worthy the noting too!
But what's the cause that you conceal'd me since?
Lor. Your melancholy, sister, since the news
Of your first favourite Don Andrea's death,
My father's old wrath hath exasperate.
Bal. And better was't for you, being in disgrace,
To absent yourself, and give his fury place.
Bel. But why had I no notice of his ire?
Lor. That were to add more fuel to your fire,
Who burnt like Aetna for Andrea's loss.
Bel. Hath not my father then enquir'd for me?
Lor. Sister, he hath, and thus excus'd I thee. (*He whispereth in her ear.*)
But Bel-imperia, see the gentle prince;
Look on thy love, behold young Balthazar,

Whose passions by thy presence are increas'd;
And in whose melancholy thou may'st see
Thy hate, his love; thy flight, his following thee.

Bel. Brother, you are become an orator —
I know not, I, by what experience —
Too politic for me, past all compare,
Since last I saw you; but content yourself:
The prince is meditating higher things.

Bal. 'Tis of thy beauty, then, that conquers kings;
Of those thy tresses, Ariadne's twines,
Wherewith my liberty thou hast surpris'd;
Of that thine ivory front, my sorrow's map,
Wherein I see no haven to rest my hope.

Bel. To love and fear, and both at once, my lord,
In my conceit, are things of more import
Than women's wits are to be busied with.

Bal. 'Tis I that love.

Bel. Whom?

Bal. Bel-imperia.

Bel. But I that fear.

Bal. Whom?

Bel. Bel-imperia.

Lor. Fear yourself?

Bel. Ay, brother.

Lor. How?

Bel. As those
That what they love are loth and fear to lose.

Bal. Then, fair, let Balthazar your keeper be.

Bel. No, Balthazar doth fear as well as we:
Et tremulo metui pavidum junxere timorem—
Est vanum stolidae proditionis opus.

Lor. Nay, and you argue things so cunningly,
We'll go continue this discourse at court.

Bal. Led by the loadstar of her heavenly looks,
Wends poor oppressed Balthazar,
As o'er the mountains walks the wanderer,
Incertain to effect his pilgrimage. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene XI.]

(*Enter two* Portingales, *and* Hieronimo *meets them.*)

1 Port. By your leave, sir.

Hier. [*'Tis neither as you think, nor as you think.*
Nor as you think; you're wide all.
These slippers are not mine, they were my son Horatio's.
My son? and what's a son? A thing begot
Within a pair of minutes — thereabout;
A lump bred up in darkness, and doth serve
To ballace these light creatures we call women;
And, at nine months' end, creeps forth to light.
What is there yet in a son,
To make a father dote, rave, or run mad?
Being born, it pouts, cries, and breeds teeth.
What is there yet in a son? He must be fed,
Be taught to go, and speak. Ay, or yet
Why might not a man love a calf as well?
Or melt in passion o'er a frisking kid,
As for a son? Methinks, a young bacon,
Or a fine little smooth horse colt,
Should move a man as much as doth a son:
For one of these, in very little time,
Will grow to some good use; whereas a son,
The more he grows in stature and in years,
The more unsquar'd, unbevell'd, he appears,
Reckons his parents among the rank of fools,
Strikes care upon their heads with his mad riots,
Makes them look old before they meet with age.
This is a son! — And what a loss were this,
Consider'd truly? — O, but my Horatio
Grew out of reach of these insatiate humours:
He lov'd his loving parents;
He was my comfort, and his mother's joy,
The very arm that did hold up our house:
Our hopes were stored up in him,
None but a damned murderer could hate him,
He had not seen the back of nineteen year,
When his strong arm unhors'd
The proud Prince Balthazar, and his great mind,
Too full of honour, took him unto mercy,
That valiant, but ignoble Portingale!
Well, heaven is heaven still!
And there is Nemesis, and Furies,
And things call'd whips,

they sometimes do meet with murderers:
They do not always scape, that is some comfort.
Ay, ay, ay; and then time steals on,
And steals, and steals, till violence leaps forth
Like thunder wrapt in a ball of fire,
And so doth bring confusion to them all.]
Good leave have you: nay, I pray you go,
For I'll leave you, if you can leave me so.

2 Port. Pray you, which is the next way to my lord the duke's?
Hier. The next way from me.
1 Port. To his house, we mean.
Hier. O, hard by: 'tis yon house that you see.
2 Port. You could not tell us if his son were there?
Hier. Who, my Lord Lorenzo?
1 Port. Ay, sir.

(*He goeth in at one door and comes out at another.*)

Hier. O, forbear!
For other talk for us far fitter were.
But if you be importunate to know
The way to him, and where to find him out,
Then list to me, and I'll resolve your doubt.
There is a path upon your left-hand side
That leadeth from a guilty conscience
Unto a forest of distrust and fear —
A darksome place, and dangerous to pass:
There shall you meet with melancholy thoughts,
Whose baleful humours if you but uphold,
It will conduct you to despair and death —
Whose rocky cliffs when you have once beheld,
Within a hugy dale of lasting night,
That, kindled with the world's iniquities,
Doth cast up filthy and detested fumes:—
Not far from thence, where murderers have built
A habitation for their cursed souls,
There, in a brazen cauldron, fix'd by Jove,
In his fell wrath, upon a sulphur flame,
Yourselves shall find Lorenzo bathing him
In boiling lead and blood of innocents.

1 Port. Ha, ha, ha!
Hier. Ha, ha, ha! Why, ha, ha, ha! Farewell, good ha, ha, ha! (*Exit.*)
2 Port. Doubtless this man is passing lunatic,
Or imperfection of his age doth make him dote.
Come, let's away to seek my lord the duke.
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene XII.]

(*Enter* Hieronimo, *with a poniard in one hand and a rope in the other.*)

Hier. Now, sir, perhaps I come and see the king;
The king sees me, and fain would hear my suit:
Why, is not this a strange and seld-seen thing,
That standers-by with toys should strike me mute?
Go to, I see their shifts, and say no more.
Hieronimo, 'tis time for thee to trudge.
Down by the dale that flows with purple gore
Standeth a fiery tower; there sits a judge
Upon a seat of steel and molten brass,
And 'twixt his teeth he holds a fire-brand,
That leads unto the lake where hell doth stand.
Away, Hieronimo! to him be gone;
He'll do thee justice for Horatio's death.
Turn down this path: thou shalt be with him straight;
Or this, and then thou need'st not take thy breath:
This way or that way? — Soft and fair, not so;
For if I hang or kill myself, let's know
Who will revenge Horatio's murder then?
No, no! fie, no! pardon me, I'll none of that.
(*He flings away the dagger and halter.*)
This way I'll take, and this way comes the king: (*He takes them up again.*)
And here I'll have a fling at him, that's flat;
And, Balthazar, I'll be with thee to bring,
And thee, Lorenzo! Here's the king — nay, stay;
And here, ay here — there goes the hare away.

(*Enter* King, Ambassador, Castile, *and* Lorenzo.)

King. Now show, ambassador, what our viceroy saith:
Hath he receiv'd the articles we sent?

Hier. Justice, O justice to Hieronimo.
Lor. Back! see'st thou not the king is busy?
Hier. O, is he so?
King. Who is he that interrupts our business?
Hier. Not I. [*Aside.*] Hieronimo, beware! go by, go by!
Amb. Renowned King, he hath receiv'd and read
Thy kingly proffers, and thy promis'd league;
And, as a man extremely over-joy'd
To hear his son so princely entertain'd,
Whose death he had so solemnly bewail'd,
This for thy further satisfaction
And kingly love he kindly lets thee know:
First, for the marriage of his princely son
With Bel-imperia, thy beloved niece,
The news are more delightful to his soul,
Than myrrh or incense to the offended heavens.
In person, therefore, will he come himself,
To see the marriage rites solemnized,
And, in the presence of the court of Spain,
To knit a sure inexplicable band
Of kingly love and everlasting league
Betwixt the crowns of Spain and Portingal.
There will he give his crown to Balthazar,
And make a queen of Bel-imperia.
King. Brother, how like you this our viceroy's love?
Cast. No doubt, my lord, it is an argument
Of honourable care to keep his friend,
And wondrous zeal to Balthazar his son;
Nor am I least indebted to his grace,
That bends his liking to my daughter thus.
Amb. Now last, dread lord, here hath his highness sent
(Although he send not that his son return)
His ransom due to Don Horatio.
Hier. Horatio! who calls Horatio?
King. And well rememb'red: thank his majesty.
Here, see it given to Horatio.
Hier. Justice, O, justice, justice, gentle king!
King. Who is that? Hieronimo?
Hier. Justice, O, justice! O my son, my son!
My son, whom naught can ransom or redeem!
Lor. Hieronimo, you are not well-advis'd.
Hier. Away, Lorenzo, hinder me no more;
For thou hast made me bankrupt of my bliss.
Give me my son! you shall not ransom him!
Away! I'll rip the bowels of the earth,
(*He diggeth with his dagger.*)
And ferry over to th' Elysian plains,
And bring my son to show his deadly wounds.
Stand from about me!
I'll make a pickaxe of my poniard,
And here surrender up my marshalship;
For I'll go marshal up the fiends in hell,
To be avenged on you all for this.
King. What means this outrage?
Will none of you restrain his fury?
Hier. Nay, soft and fair! you shall not need to strive.
Needs must he go that the devils drive.
(*Exit.*)
King. What accident hath happ'd Hieronimo?
I have not seen him to demean him so.
Lor. My gracious lord, he is with extreme pride,
Conceiv'd of young Horatio his son
And covetous of having to himself
The ransom of the young prince Balthazar,
Distract, and in a manner lunatic.
King. Believe me, nephew, we are sorry for't:
This is the love that fathers bear their sons.
But, gentle brother, go give to him this gold,
The prince's ransom; let him have his due.
For what he hath, Horatio shall not want;
Haply Hieronimo hath need thereof.
Lor. But if he be thus helplessly distract,
'Tis requisite his office be resign'd,
And giv'n to one of more discretion.
King. We shall increase his melancholy so.
'Tis best that we see further in it first,
Till when, ourself will execute the place.
And, brother, now bring in the ambassador,
That he may be a witness of the match

'Twixt Balthazar and Bel-imperia,
And that we may prefix a certain time,
Wherein the marriage shall be solemniz'd,
That we may have thy lord, the viceroy, here.
Amb. Therein your highness highly shall content
His majesty, that longs to hear from hence.
King. On, then, and hear you, lord ambassador —— (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene XIIa.]

[*Enter* Jaques *and* Pedro.

Jaq. *I wonder, Pedro, why our master thus*
At midnight sends us with our torches light,
When man, and bird, and beast, are all at rest,
Save those that watch for rape and bloody murder.
Ped. *O Jaques, know thou that our master's mind*
Is much distraught, since his Horatio died,
And — now his aged years should sleep in rest,
His heart in quiet — like a desperate man,
Grows lunatic and childish for his son.
Sometimes, as he doth at his table sit,
He speaks as if Horatio stood by him;
Then starting in a rage, falls on the earth,
Cries out, "Horatio, where is my Horatio?"
So that with extreme grief and cutting sorrow
There is not left in him one inch of man:
See, where he comes.

(*Enter* Hieronimo.)

Hier. *I pry through every crevice of each wall,*
Look on each tree, and search through every brake,
Beat at the bushes, stamp our grandam earth,
Dive in the water, and stare up to heaven,
Yet cannot I behold my son Horatio.—
How now, who's there? Spirits, spirits?
Ped. *We are your servants that attend you, sir.*
Hier. *What make you with your torches in the dark?*
Ped. *You bid us light them, and attend you here.*
Hier. *No, no, you are deceiv'd! not I; — you are deceiv'd!*
Was I so mad to bid you light your torches now?
Light me your torches at the mid of noon,
When-as the sun-god rides in all his glory;
Light me your torches then.
Ped. *Then we burn daylight.*
Hier. *Let it be burnt; Night is a murderous slut,*
That would not have her treasons to be seen;
And yonder pale-fac'd Hecate there, the moon,
Doth give consent to that is done in darkness;
And all those stars that gaze upon her face,
Are aglets on her sleeve, pins on her train;
And those that should be powerful and divine,
Do sleep in darkness when they most should shine.
Ped. *Provoke them not, fair sir, with tempting words:*
The heav'ns are gracious, and your miseries
And sorrow makes you speak you know not what.
Hier. *Villain, thou liest! and thou dost nought*
But tell me I am mad. Thou liest, I am not mad!
I know thee to be Pedro, and he Jaques.
I'll prove it to thee; and were I mad, how could I?
Where was she that same night when my Horatio
Was murd'red? She should have shone: search thou the book.
Had the moon shone, in my boy's face there was a kind of grace,
That I know — nay, I do know — had the murderer seen him,
His weapon would have fall'n and cut the earth,
Had he been fram'd of naught but blood and death.
Alack! when mischief doth it knows not what,
What shall we say to mischief?

(*Enter* Isabella.)

Isab. *Dear Hieronimo, come in a-doors;*
O, seek not means so to increase thy sorrow.
Hier. *Indeed, Isabella, we do nothing here;*
I do not cry: ask Pedro, and ask Jaques;
Not I indeed; we are very merry, very merry.

Isab. *How? be merry here, be merry here?*
Is not this the place, and this the very tree,
Where my Horatio died, where he was murdered?
Hier. *Was — do not say what: let her weep it out.*
This was the tree; I set it of a kernel:
And when our hot Spain could not let it grow,
But that the infant and the human sap
Began to wither, duly twice a morning
Would I be sprinkling it with fountain-water.
At last it grew and grew, and bore and bore,
Till at the length
It grew a gallows, and did bear our son;
It bore thy fruit and mine — O wicked, wicked plant!
(*One knocks within at the door.*)
See, who knocks there.
Ped. *It is a painter, sir.*
Hier. *Bid him come in, and paint some comfort,*
For surely there's none lives but painted comfort.
Let him come in! — One knows not what may chance:
God's will that I should set this tree! — but even so
Masters ungrateful servants rear from nought,
And then they hate them that did bring them up.

(*Enter the* Painter.)

Paint. *God bless you, sir.*
Hier. *Wherefore? Why, thou scornful villain?*
How, where, or by what means should I be bless'd?
Isab. *What wouldst thou have, good fellow?*
Paint. *Justice, madam.*
Hier. *O ambitious beggar!*
Wouldst thou have that that lives not in the world?
Why, all the undelved mines cannot buy
An ounce of justice!
'Tis a jewel so inestimable. I tell thee,
God hath engross'd all justice in his hands,
And there is none but what comes from him.
Paint. *O, then I see*
That God must right me for my murd'red son.
Hier. *How, was thy son murdered?*
Paint. *Ay, sir; no man did hold a son so dear.*
Hier. *What, not as thine? That's a lie,*
As massy as the earth. I had a son
Whose least unvalued hair did weigh
A thousand of thy sons: and he was murdered.
Paint. Alas, sir, I had no more but he.
Hier. *Nor I, nor I: but this same one of mine*
Was worth a legion. But all is one.
Pedro, Jaques, go in a-doors; Isabella, go,
And this good fellow here and I
Will range this hideous orchard up and down,
Like to two lions reaved of their young.
Go in a-doors, I say.
[*Exeunt. The* Painter *and he sit down.*]
Come, let's talk wisely now.
Was thy son murdered?
Paint. *Ay, sir.*
Hier. *So was mine.*
How dost take it? Art thou not sometimes mad?
Is there no tricks that comes before thine eyes?
Paint. *O Lord, yes, sir.*

Hier. *Art a painter? Canst paint me a tear, or a wound, a groan, or a sigh? Canst paint me such a tree as this?*

Paint. *Sir, I am sure you have heard of my painting: my name's Bazardo.*

Hier. *Bazardo! Afore God, an excellent fellow. Look you, sir, do you see? I'd have you paint me [for] my gallery, in your oil-colours matted, and draw me five years younger than I am — do ye see, sir, let five years go; let them go like the marshal of Spain — my wife Isabella standing by me, with a speaking look to my son Horatio, which should intend to this or some such-like purpose: "God bless thee, my sweet son," and my hand leaning upon his head, thus, sir; do you see? May it be done?*

Paint. *Very well, sir.*

Hier. *Nay, I pray, mark me, sir. Then, sir, would I have you paint me this tree, this very tree. Canst paint a doleful cry?*

Paint. *Seemingly, sir.*

Hier. *Nay, it should bry; but all is one.*

Well, sir, paint me a youth run through and through with villains' swords, hanging upon this tree. Canst thou draw a murderer?

Paint. *I'll warrant you, sir; I have the pattern of the most notorious villains that ever lived in all Spain.*

Hier. *O, let them be worse, worse: stretch thine art, and let their beards be of Judas his own colour; and let their eye-brows jutty over: in any case observe that. Then, sir, after some violent noise, bring me forth in my shirt, and my gown under mine arm, with my torch in my hand, and my sword reared up, thus: — and with these words:*

"What noise is this? Who calls Hieronimo?" May it be done?

Paint. *Yea, sir.*

Hier. *Well, sir; then bring me forth, bring me through alley and alley, still with a distracted countenance going along, and let my hair heave up my night-cap. Let the clouds scowl, make the moon dark, the stars extinct, the winds blowing, the bells tolling, the owls shrieking, the toads croaking, the minutes jarring, and the clock striking twelve. And then at last, sir, starting, behold a man hanging, and tottering and tottering, as you know the wind will wave a man, and I with a trice to cut him down. And looking upon him by the advantage of my torch, find it to be my son Horatio. There you may [show] a passion, there you may show a passion! Draw me like old Priam of Troy, crying, "The house is a-fire, the house is a-fire, as the torch over my head!" Make me curse, make me rave, make me cry, make me mad, make me well again, make me curse hell, invocate heaven, and in the end leave me in a trance — and so forth.*

Paint. *And is this the end?*

Hier. *O no, there is no end; the end is death and madness! As I am never better than when I am mad; then methinks I am a brave fellow, then I do wonders; but reason abuseth me, and there's the torment, there's the hell. At the last, sir, bring me to one of the murderers: were he as strong as Hector, thus would I tear and drag him up and down.*

(*He beats the* Painter *in, then comes out again, with a book in his hand.*)]

[Scene XIII.]

(*Enter* Hieronimo, *with a book in his hand.*)

[Hier.] *Vindicta mihi!*
Ay, heaven will be reveng'd of every ill;
Nor will they suffer murder unrepaid.
Then stay, Hieronimo, attend their will:
For mortal men may not appoint their time!
"*Per scelus semper tutum est sceleribus iter.*"
Strike, and strike home, where wrong is off'red thee;
For evils unto ills conductors be,
And death's the worst of resolution.
For he that thinks with patience to contend
To quiet life, his life shall easily end. —
"*Fata si miseros juvant, habes salutem;*
Fata si vitam negant, habes sepulchrum":
If destiny thy miseries do ease,
Then hast thou health, and happy shalt thou be;
If destiny deny thee life, Hieronimo,
Yet shalt thou be assured of a tomb;
If neither, yet let this thy comfort be:
Heaven covereth him that hath no burial.
And to conclude, I will revenge his death!
But how? Not as the vulgar wits of men,
With open, but inevitable ills,
As by a secret, yet a certain mean,
Which under kindship will be cloaked best.
Wise men will take their opportunity,
Closely and safely fitting things to time.
But in extremes advantage hath no time;
And therefore all times fit not for revenge.
Thus therefore will I rest me in unrest,
Dissembling quiet in unquietness,
Not seeming that I know their villanies,
That my simplicity may make them think
That ignorantly I will let all slip;
For ignorance, I wot, and well they know,
Remedium malorum iners est.
Nor ought avails it me to menace them,
Who, as a wintry storm upon a plain,
Will bear me down with their nobility.
No, no, Hieronimo, thou must enjoin
Thine eyes to observation, and thy tongue
To milder speeches than thy spirit affords,
Thy heart to patience, and thy hands to rest,
Thy cap to courtesy, and thy knee to bow,

Till to revenge thou know when, where, and how. (*A noise within.*)
How now, what noise? What coil is that you keep?
[*Enter a Servant.*]
Serv. Here are a sort of poor petitioners
That are importunate, and it shall please you, sir,
That you should plead their cases to the king.
Hier. That I should plead their several actions?
Why, let them enter, and let me see them.

(*Enter three Citizens and an Old Man.*)

1 Cit. So, I tell you this: for learning and for law,
There is not any advocate in Spain
That can prevail, or will take half the pain
That he will, in pursuit of equity.
Hier. Come near, you men, that thus importune me. —
[*Aside.*] Now must I bear a face of gravity;
For thus I us'd, before my marshalship,
To plead in causes as corregidor. —
Come on, sirs, what's the matter?
2 Cit. Sir, an action.
Hier. Of battery?
1 Cit. Mine of debt.
Hier. Give place.
2 Cit. No, sir, mine is an action of the case.
3 Cit. Mine an *ejectione firmae* by a lease.
Hier. Content you, sirs; are you determined
That I should plead your several actions?
1 Cit. Ay, sir, and here's my declaration.
2 Cit. And here's my band.
3 Cit. And here's my lease.
(*They give him papers.*)
Hier. But wherefore stands yon silly man so mute,
With mournful eyes and hands to heaven uprear'd?
Come hither, father, let me know thy cause.
Senex. O worthy sir, my cause, but slightly known,
May move the hearts of warlike Myrmidons,
And melt the Corsic rocks with ruthful tears.
Hier. Say, father, tell me, what's thy suit?
Senex. No, sir, could my woes
Give way unto my most distressful words,
Then should I not in paper, as you see,
With ink bewray what blood began in me.
Hier. What's here? "The humble supplication
Of Don Bazulto for his murd'red son."
Senex. Ay, sir.
Hier. No, sir, it was my murd'red son:
O my son, my son, O my son Horatio!
But mine, or thine, Bazulto, be content.
Here, take my handkercher and wipe thine eyes,
Whiles wretched I in thy mishaps may see
The lively portrait of my dying self.
(*He draweth out a bloody napkin.*)
O no, not this; Horatio, this was thine;
And when I dy'd it in thy dearest blood,
This was a token 'twixt thy soul and me,
That of thy death revenged I should be.
But here, take this, and this — what, my purse? —
Ay, this, and that, and all of them are thine;
For all as one are our extremities.
1 Cit. O, see the kindness of Hieronimo!
2 Cit. This gentleness shows him a gentleman.
Hier. See, see, O see thy shame, Hieronimo!
See here a loving father to his son!
Behold the sorrows and the sad laments,
That he delivereth for his son's decease!
If love's effects so strive in lesser things,
If love enforce such moods in meaner wits,
If love express such power in poor estates,
Hieronimo, as when a raging sea,
Toss'd with the wind and tide, o'erturneth then
The upper billows, course of waves to keep,
Whilst lesser waters labour in the deep,
Then sham'st thou not, Hieronimo, to neglect
The sweet revenge of thy Horatio?
Though on this earth justice will not be found,
I'll down to hell, and in this passion

Knock at the dismal gates of Pluto's court,
Getting by force, as once Alcides did,
A troop of Furies and tormenting hags
To torture Don Lorenzo and the rest.
Yet lest the triple-headed porter should
Deny my passage to the slimy strand,
The Thracian poet thou shalt counterfeit.
Come on, old father, be my Orpheus,
And if thou canst no notes upon the harp,
Then sound the burden of thy sore heart's grief,
Till we do gain that Proserpine may grant
Revenge on them that murdered my son.
Then will I rent and tear them, thus and thus,
Shivering their limbs in pieces with my teeth. *(Tears the papers.)*

1 CIT. O sir, my declaration!
(Exit HIERONIMO, *and they after.)*

2 CIT. Save my bond!

(Enter HIERONIMO.)

2 CIT. Save my bond!

3 CIT. Alas, my lease! it cost me ten pound,
And you, my lord, have torn the same.

HIER. That cannot be, I gave it never a wound.
Show me one drop of blood fall from the same!
How is it possible I should slay it then?
Tush, no; run after, catch me if you can.
(Exeunt all but the Old Man. BAZULTO *remains till* HIERONIMO *enters again, who, staring him in the face, speaks.)*

HIER. And art thou come, Horatio, from the depth,
To ask for justice in this upper earth,
To tell thy father thou art unreveng'd,
To wring more tears from Isabella's eyes,
Whose lights are dimm'd with over-long laments?
Go back, my son, complain to Aeacus,
For here's no justice; gentle boy, begone,
For justice is exiled from the earth:
Hieronimo will bear thee company.
Thy mother cries on righteous Rhadamanth
For just revenge against the murderers.

SENEX. Alas, my lord, whence springs this troubled speech?

HIER. But let me look on my Horatio.
Sweet boy, how art thou chang'd in death's black shade!
Had Proserpine no pity on thy youth,
But suffered thy fair crimson-colour'd spring
With withered winter to be blasted thus?
Horatio, thou art older than thy father.
Ah, ruthless fate, that favour thus transforms!

BAZ. Ah, my good lord, I am not your young son.

HIER. What, not my son? Thou then a Fury art,
Sent from the empty kingdom of black night
To summon me to make appearance
Before grim Minos and just Rhadamanth,
To plague Hieronimo that is remiss,
And seeks not vengeance for Horatio's death.

BAZ. I am a grieved man, and not a ghost,
That came for justice for my murdered son.

HIER. Ay, now I know thee, now thou nam'st thy son.
Thou art the lively image of my grief;
Within thy face my sorrows I may see.
Thy eyes are gumm'd with tears, thy cheeks are wan,
Thy forehead troubled, and thy mutt'ring lips
Murmur sad words abruptly broken off
By force of windy sighs thy spirit breathes;
And all this sorrow riseth for thy son:
And selfsame sorrow feel I for my son.
Come in, old man, thou shalt to Isabel.
Lean on my arm: I thee, thou me, shalt stay,
And thou, and I, and she will sing a song,
Three parts in one, but all of discords fram'd —:
Talk not of chords, but let us now be gone,
For with a cord Horatio was slain.
(Exeunt.)

[SCENE XIV.]

(Enter KING OF SPAIN, *the* DUKE, VICEROY, *and* LORENZO, BALTHAZAR, DON PEDRO, *and* BEL-IMPERIA.)

KING. Go, brother, it is the Duke of Castile's cause;

Salute the Viceroy in our name.
Cast. I go.
Vic. Go forth, Don Pedro, for thy nephew's sake,
And greet the Duke of Castile.
Ped. It shall be so.
King. And now to meet these Portuguese:
For as we now are, so sometimes were these,
Kings and commanders of the western Indies.
Welcome, brave Viceroy, to the court of Spain,
And welcome all his honourable train!
'Tis not unknown to us for why you come,
Or have so kingly cross'd the seas:
Sufficeth it, in this we note the troth
And more than common love you lend to us.
So is it that mine honourable niece
(For it beseems us now that it be known)
Already is betroth'd to Balthazar:
And by appointment and our condescent
To-morrow are they to be married.
To this intent we entertain thyself,
Thy followers, their pleasure, and our peace.
Speak, men of Portingal, shall it be so?
If ay, say so; if not, say flatly no.
Vic. Renowned King, I come not, as thou think'st,
With doubtful followers, unresolved men,
But such as have upon thine articles
Confirm'd thy motion, and contented me.
Know, sovereign, I come to solemnize
The marriage of thy beloved niece,
Fair Bel-imperia, with my Balthazar, —
With thee, my son; whom sith I live to see,
Here take my crown, I give it her and thee;
And let me live a solitary life,
In ceaseless prayers,
To think how strangely heaven hath thee preserv'd.
King. See, brother, see, how nature strives in him!
Come, worthy Viceroy, and accompany
Thy friend with thine extremities;
A place more private fits this princely mood.
Vic. Or here, or where your highness thinks it good.
(*Exeunt all but* Castile *and* Lorenzo.)

Cast. Nay, stay, Lorenzo, let me talk with you.
See'st thou this entertainment of these kings?
Lor. I do, my lord, and joy to see the same.
Cast. And know'st thou why this meeting is?
Lor. For her, my lord, whom Balthazar doth love,
And to confirm their promised marriage.
Cast. She is thy sister?
Lor. Who, Bel-imperia? Ay,
My gracious lord, and this is the day,
That I have long'd so happily to see.
Cast. Thou wouldst be loth that any fault of thine
Should intercept her in her happiness?
Lor. Heavens will not let Lorenzo err so much.
Cast. Why then, Lorenzo, listen to my words:
It is suspected, and reported too,
That thou, Lorenzo, wrong'st Hieronimo,
And in his suits towards his majesty
Still keep'st him back, and seek'st to cross his suit.
Lor. That I, my lord ——?
Cast. I tell thee, son, myself have heard it said,
When (to my sorrow) I have been ashamed
To answer for thee, though thou art my son.
Lorenzo, know'st thou not the common love
And kindness that Hieronimo hath won
By his deserts within the court of Spain?
Or see'st thou not the king my brother's care
In his behalf, and to procure his health?
Lorenzo, shouldst thou thwart his passions,
And he exclaim against thee to the king,
What honour were't in this assembly,
Or what a scandal were't among the kings
To hear Hieronimo exclaim on thee?
Tell me — and look thou tell me truly too —
Whence grows the ground of this report in court?
Lor. My lord, it lies not in Lorenzo's power
To stop the vulgar, liberal of their tongues.
A small advantage makes a water-breach,

And no man lives that long contenteth all.
Cast. Myself have seen thee busy to keep back
Him and his supplications from the king.
Lor. Yourself, my lord, hath seen his passions,
That ill beseem'd the presence of a king:
And, for I pitied him in his distress,
I held him thence with kind and courteous words
As free from malice to Hieronimo
As to my soul, my lord.
Cast. Hieronimo, my son, mistakes thee then.
Lor. My gracious father, believe me, so he doth.
But what's a silly man, distract in mind
To think upon the murder of his son?
Alas! how easy is it for him to err!
But for his satisfaction and the world's,
'Twere good, my lord, that Hieronimo and I
Were reconcil'd, if he misconster me.
Cast. Lorenzo, thou hast said; it shall be so.
Go one of you, and call Hieronimo.

(*Enter* Balthazar *and* Bel-imperia.)

Bal. Come, Bel-imperia, Balthazar's content,
My sorrow's ease and sovereign of my bliss,
Sith heaven hath ordain'd thee to be mine:
Disperse those clouds and melancholy looks,
And clear them up with those thy sun-bright eyes,
Wherein my hope and heaven's fair beauty lies.
Bel. My looks, my lord, are fitting for my love,
Which, new-begun, can show no brighter yet.
Bal. New-kindled flames should burn as morning sun.
Bel. But not too fast, lest heat and all be done.
I see my lord my father.
Bal. Truce, my love;
I will go salute him.
Cast. Welcome, Balthazar,
Welcome, brave prince, the pledge of Castile's peace!
And welcome, Bel-imperia! — How now, girl?
Why com'st thou sadly to salute us thus?
Content thyself, for I am satisfied:
It is not now as when Andrea liv'd;
We have forgotten and forgiven that,
And thou art graced with a happier love. —
But, Balthazar, here comes Hieronimo;
I'll have a word with him.

(*Enter* Hieronimo *and a Servant.*)

Hier. And where's the duke?
Serv. Yonder.
Hier. Even so.—
What new device have they devised, trow?
Pocas palabras! mild as the lamb!
Is't I will be reveng'd? No, I am not the man.
Cast. Welcome, Hieronimo.
Lor. Welcome, Hieronimo.
Bal. Welcome, Hieronimo.
Hier. My lords, I thank you for Horatio.
Cast. Hieronimo, the reason that I sent
To speak with you, is this.
Hier. What, so short?
Then I'll be gone, I thank you for't.
Cast. Nay, stay, Hieronimo! — go call him, son.
Lor. Hieronimo, my father craves a word with you.
Hier. With me, sir? Why, my lord, I thought you had done.
Lor. No; [*Aside*] would he had!
Cast. Hieronimo, I hear
You find yourself aggrieved at my son,
Because you have not access unto the king;
And say 'tis he that intercepts your suits.
Hier. Why, is not this a miserable thing, my lord?
Cast. Hieronimo, I hope you have no cause,
And would be loth that one of your deserts
Should once have reason to suspect my son,
Considering how I think of you myself.
Hier. Your son Lorenzo! Whom, my noble lord?
The hope of Spain, mine honourable friend?
Grant me the combat of them, if they dare: (*Draws out his sword.*)
I'll meet him face to face, to tell me so!
These be the scandalous reports of such
As love not me, and hate my lord too much.

Should I suspect Lorenzo would prevent
Or cross my suit, that lov'd my son so well?
My lord, I am asham'd it should be said.
Lor. Hieronimo, I never gave you cause.
Hier. My good lord, I know you did not.
Cast. There then pause;
And for the satisfaction of the world,
Hieronimo, frequent my homely house,
The Duke of Castile, Cyprian's ancient seat;
And when thou wilt, use me, my son, and it:
But here, before Prince Balthazar and me,
Embrace each other, and be perfect friends.
Hier. Ay, marry, my lord, and shall.
Friends, quoth he? See, I'll be friends with you all:
Especially with you, my lovely lord;
For divers causes it is fit for us
That we be friends: the world's suspicious,
And men may think what we imagine not.
Bal. Why, this is friendly done, Hieronimo.
Lor. And that I hope old grudges are forgot.
Hier. What else? It were a shame it should not be so.
Cast. Come on, Hieronimo, at my request;
Let us entreat your company to-day.
(*Exeunt.*)
Hier. Your lordship's to command. — Pah! keep your way:
Chi mi fa più carezze che non suole,
Tradito mi ha, o tradir mi vuole. (*Exit.*)

[Chorus.]

(*Enter* Ghost *and* Revenge.)

Ghost. Awake, Erichtho! Cerberus, awake!
Solicit Pluto, gentle Proserpine!
To combat, Acheron and Erebus!
For ne'er, by Styx and Phlegethon in hell,
Nor ferried Charon to the fiery lakes
Such fearful sights, as poor Andrea sees.
Revenge, awake!
Revenge. Awake? For why?
Ghost. Awake, Revenge; for thou art ill-advis'd
To sleep away what thou art warn'd to watch!
Revenge. Content thyself, and do not trouble me.
Ghost. Awake, Revenge, if love — as love hath had —
Have yet the power or prevalence in hell!
Hieronimo with Lorenzo is join'd in league,
And intercepts our passage to revenge.
Awake, Revenge, or we are woe-begone!
Revenge. Thus worldlings ground what they have dream'd upon.
Content thyself, Andrea: though I sleep,
Yet is my mood soliciting their souls.
Sufficeth thee that poor Hieronimo
Cannot forget his son Horatio.
Nor dies Revenge, although he sleep awhile;
For in unquiet, quietness is feign'd,
And slumb'ring is a common worldly wile.
Behold, Andrea, for an instance, how
Revenge hath slept, and then imagine thou,
What 'tis to be subject to destiny.

(*Enter a Dumb-Show.*)

Ghost. Awake, Revenge; reveal this mystery.
Revenge. Lo! the two first the nuptial torches bore
As brightly burning as the mid-day's sun;
But after them doth Hymen hie as fast,
Clothed in sable and a saffron robe,
And blows them out, and quencheth them with blood,
As discontent that things continue so.
Ghost. Sufficeth me; thy meaning's understood,
And thanks to thee and those infernal powers
That will not tolerate a lover's woe.
Rest thee, for I will sit to see the rest.
Revenge. Then argue not, for thou hast thy request. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV

[Scene I.]

(*Enter* Bel-imperia *and* Hieronimo.)

Bel. Is this the love thou bear'st Horatio?
Is this the kindness that thou counterfeits?
Are these the fruits of thine incessant tears?

Hieronimo, are these thy passions,
Thy protestations and thy deep laments,
That thou wert wont to weary men withal?
O unkind father! O deceitful world!
With what excuses canst thou show thyself
From this dishonour and the hate of men,
Thus to neglect the loss and life of him
Whom both my letters and thine own belief
Assures thee to be causeless slaughtered?
Hieronimo, for shame, Hieronimo,
Be not a history to after-times
Of such ingratitude unto thy son.
Unhappy mothers of such children then!
But monstrous fathers to forget so soon
The death of those whom they with care and cost
Have tend'red so, thus careless should be lost.
Myself, a stranger in respect of thee,
So lov'd his life, as still I wish their deaths.
Nor shall his death be unreveng'd by me,
Although I bear it out for fashion's sake;
For here I swear, in sight of heaven and earth,
Shouldst thou neglect the love thou shouldst retain,
And give it over and devise no more,
Myself should send their hateful souls to hell
That wrought his downfall with extremest death.

Hier. But may it be that Bel-imperia
Vows such revenge as she hath deign'd to say?
Why, then I see that heaven applies our drift,
And all the saints do sit soliciting
For vengeance on those cursed murderers.
Madam, 'tis true, and now I find it so,
I found a letter, written in your name,
And in that letter, how Horatio died.
Pardon, O pardon, Bel-imperia,
My fear and care in not believing it;
Nor think I thoughtless think upon a mean
To let his death be unreveng'd at full.
And here I vow — so you but give consent,
And will conceal my resolution —
I will ere long determine of their deaths
That causeless thus have murdered my son.

Bel. Hieronimo, I will consent, conceal,
And ought that may effect for thine avail,
Join with thee to revenge Horatio's death.

Hier. On, then; [and] whatsoever I devise,
Let me entreat you, grace my practices,
For-why the plot's already in mine head.
Here they are.

(*Enter* Balthazar *and* Lorenzo.)

Bal. How now, Hieronimo?
What, courting Bel-imperia?

Hier. Ay, my lord;
Such courting as, I promise you,
She hath my heart, but you, my lord, have hers.

Lor. But now, Hieronimo, or never,
We are to entreat your help.

Hier. My help?
Why, my good lords, assure yourselves of me;
For you have giv'n me cause, — ay, by my faith have you!

Bal. It pleas'd you, at the entertainment of the ambassador,
To grace the king so much as with a show.
Now, were your study so well furnished,
As, for the passing of the first night's sport,
To entertain my father with the like,
Or any such-like pleasing motion,
Assure yourself, it would content them well.

Hier. Is this all?

Bal. Ay, this is all.

Hier. Why then, I'll fit you; say no more.
When I was young, I gave my mind
And plied myself to fruitless poetry;
Which though it profit the professor naught,
Yet is it passing pleasing to the world.

Lor. And how for that?

Hier. Marry, my good lord, thus: —
And yet methinks, you are too quick with us —
When in Toledo there I studied,
It was my chance to write a tragedy,
See here, my lords — (*He shows them a book.*)
Which, long forgot, I found this other day.
Now would your lordships favour me so much
As but to grace me with your acting it —
I mean each one of you to play a part —

Assure you it will prove most passing strange,
And wondrous plausible to that assembly.
Bal. What, would you have us play a tragedy?
Hier. Why, Nero thought it no disparagement.
And kings and emperors have ta'en delight
To make experience of their wits in plays.
Lor. Nay, be not angry, good Hieronimo;
The prince but ask'd a question.
Bal. In faith, Hieronimo, an you be in earnest,
I'll make one.
Lor. And I another.
Hier. Now, my good lord, could you entreat
Your sister Bel-imperia to make one?
For what's a play without a woman in it?
Bel. Little entreaty shall serve me, Hieronimo;
For I must needs be employed in your play.
Hier. Why, this is well. I tell you, lordings,
It was determined to have been acted
By gentlemen and scholars too,
Such as could tell what to speak.
Bal. And now
It shall be play'd by princes and courtiers,
Such as can tell how to speak:
If, as it is our country manner,
You will but let us know the argument.
Hier. That shall I roundly. The chronicles of Spain
Record this written of a knight of Rhodes:
He was betroth'd, and wedded at the length,
To one Perseda, an Italian dame,
Whose beauty ravish'd all that her beheld,
Especially the soul of Soliman,
Who at the marriage was the chiefest guest.
By sundry means sought Soliman to win
Perseda's love, and could not gain the same.
Then 'gan he break his passions to a friend,
One of his bashaws, whom he held full dear.
Her had this bashaw long solicited,
And saw she was not otherwise to be won,
But by her husband's death, this knight of Rhodes,
Whom presently by treachery he slew.
She, stirr'd with an exceeding hate therefore,
As cause of this slew Soliman,
And, to escape the bashaw's tyranny,
Did stab herself: and this the tragedy.
Lor. O excellent!
Bel. But say, Hieronimo,
What then became of him that was the bashaw?
Hier. Marry, thus: mov'd with remorse of his misdeeds,
Ran to a mountain-top, and hung himself.
Bal. But which of us is to perform that part?
Hier. O, that will I, my lords; make no doubt of it.
I'll play the murderer, I warrant you;
For I already have conceited that.
Bal. And what shall I?
Hier. Great Soliman, the Turkish emperor.
Lor. And I?
Hier. Erastus, the knight of Rhodes.
Bel. And I?
Hier. Perseda, chaste and resolute.
And here, my lords, are several abstracts drawn,
For each of you to note your parts,
And act it, as occasion's off'red you.
You must provide a Turkish cap,
A black mustachio and a falchion;
(*Gives a paper to* Balthazar.)
You with a cross, like to a knight of Rhodes;
(*Gives another to* Lorenzo.)
And, madam, you must attire yourself
(*He giveth* Bel-imperia *another.*)
Like Phoebe, Flora, or the huntress [Dian],
Which to your discretion shall seem best.
And as for me, my lords, I'll look to one,
And, with the ransom that the viceroy sent,
So furnish and perform this tragedy,
As all the world shall say, Hieronimo
Was liberal in gracing of it so.
Bal. Hieronimo, methinks a comedy were better.
Hier. A comedy?
Fie! comedies are fit for common wits;

But to present a kingly troop withal,
Give me a stately-written tragedy;
Tragoedia cothurnata, fitting kings,
Containing matter, and not common things.
My lords, all this must be performed,
As fitting for the first night's revelling.
The Italian tragedians were so sharp of wit,
That in one hour's meditation
They would perform anything in action.

Lor. And well it may; for I have seen the like
In Paris 'mongst the French tragedians.

Hier. In Paris? mass! and well remembered!
There's one thing more that rests for us to do.

Bal. What's that, Hieronimo? Forget not anything.

Hier. Each one of us
Must act his part in unknown languages,
That it may breed the more variety:
As you, my lord, in Latin, I in Greek,
You in Italian; and for because I know
That Bel-imperia hath practised the French,
In courtly French shall all her phrases be.

Bel. You mean to try my cunning then, Hieronimo?

Bal. But this will be a mere confusion
And hardly shall we all be understood.

Hier. It must be so; for the conclusion
Shall prove the invention and all was good:
And I myself in an oration,
And with a strange and wondrous show besides,
That I will have there behind a curtain,
Assure yourself, shall make the matter known;
And all shall be concluded in one scene,
For there's no pleasure ta'en in tediousness.

Bal. How like you this?

Lor. Why, thus my lord:
We must resolve to soothe his humours up.

Bal. On then, Hieronimo; farewell till soon.

Hier. You'll ply this gear?

Lor. I warrant you.

(*Exeunt all but* Hieronimo.)

Hier. Why so:
Now shall I see the fall of Babylon,
Wrought by the heavens in this confusion.
And if the world like not this tragedy,
Hard is the hap of old Hieronimo. (*Exit.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Isabella *with a weapon.*)

Isab. Tell me no more! — O monstrous homicides!
Since neither piety or pity moves
The king to justice or compassion,
I will revenge myself upon this place,
Where thus they murdered my beloved son. (*She cuts down the arbour.*)
Down with these branches and these loathsome boughs
Of this unfortunate and fatal pine!
Down with them, Isabella; rent them up,
And burn the roots from whence the rest is sprung!
I will not leave a root, a stalk, a tree,
A bough, a branch, a blossom, nor a leaf,
No, not an herb within this garden-plot,—
Accursed complot of my misery!
Fruitless for ever may this garden be,
Barren the earth, and blissless whosoever
Imagines not to keep it unmanur'd!
An eastern wind, commix'd with noisome airs,
Shall blast the plants and the young saplings;
The earth with serpents shall be pestered,
And passengers, for fear to be infect,
Shall stand aloof, and, looking at it, tell:
"There, murd'red, died the son of Isabel."
Ay, here he died, and here I him embrace:
See, where his ghost solicits with his wounds
Revenge on her that should revenge his death.
Hieronimo, make haste to see thy son;
For sorrow and despair hath cited me
To hear Horatio plead with Rhadamanth.
Make haste, Hieronimo, to hold excus'd
Thy negligence in pursuit of their deaths
Whose hateful wrath bereav'd him of his breath.
Ah, nay, thou dost delay their deaths,
Forgives the murderers of thy noble son,
And none but I bestir me — to no end!
And as I curse this tree from further fruit,
So shall my womb be cursed for his sake;

And with this weapon will I wound the breast,
The hapless breast, that gave Horatio suck.
(*She stabs herself.*)

[Scene III.]

(*Enter* Hieronimo; *he knocks up the curtain.*)
(*Enter the* Duke of Castile.)

Cast. How now, Hieronimo, where's your fellows,
That you take all this pain?
Hier. O sir, it is for the author's credit,
To look that all things may go well.
But, good my lord, let me entreat your grace,
To give the king the copy of the play:
This is the argument of what we show.
Cast. I will, Hieronimo.
Hier. One thing more, my good lord.
Cast. What's that?
Hier. Let me entreat your grace
That, when the train are pass'd into the gallery,
You would vouchsafe to throw me down the key.
Cast. I will, Hieronimo. (*Exit* Castile.)
Hier. What, are you ready, Balthazar?
Bring a chair and a cushion for the king.

(*Enter* Balthazar, *with a chair.*)

Well done, Balthazar! hang up the title:
Our scene is Rhodes. What, is your beard on?
Bal. Half on; the other is in my hand.
Hier. Despatch for shame; are you so long? (*Exit* Balthazar.)
Bethink thyself, Hieronimo,
Recall thy wits, recount thy former wrongs
Thou hast receiv'd by murder of thy son,
And lastly, not least! how Isabel,
Once his mother and thy dearest wife,
All woe-begone for him, hath slain herself.
Behoves thee then, Hieronimo, to be reveng'd!
The plot is laid of dire revenge:
On, then, Hieronimo, pursue revenge;
For nothing wants but acting of revenge!
(*Exit* Hieronimo.)

[Scene IV.]

(*Enter* Spanish King, Viceroy, *the* Duke of Castile, *and their train* [*to the gallery*].)

King. Now, Viceroy, shall we see the tragedy
Of Soliman, the Turkish emperor,
Perform'd of pleasure by your son the prince,
My nephew Don Lorenzo, and my niece.
Vic. Who? Bel-imperia?
King. Ay, and Hieronimo, our marshal,
At whose request they deign to do't themselves.
These be our pastimes in the court of Spain.
Here, brother, you shall be the bookkeeper:
This is the argument of that they show.
(*He giveth him a book.*)

Gentlemen, this play of Hieronimo, in sundry languages, was thought good to be set down in English, more largely, for the easier understanding to every public reader.

(*Enter* Balthazar, Bel-imperia, *and* Hieronimo.)

Bal. *Bashaw, that Rhodes is ours, yield heavens the honour,*
And holy Mahomet, our sacred prophet!
And be thou grac'd with every excellence
That Soliman can give, or thou desire.
But thy desert in conquering Rhodes is less
Than in reserving this fair Christian nymph,
Perseda, blissful lamp of excellence,
Whose eyes compel, like powerful adamant,
The warlike heart of Soliman to wait.
King. See, Viceroy, that is Balthazar, your son,
That represents the emperor Soliman:
How well he acts his amorous passion!
Vic. Ay, Bel-imperia hath taught him that.
Cast. That's because his mind runs all on Bel-imperia.
Hier. *Whatever joy earth yields, betide your majesty.*
Bal. *Earth yields no joy without Perseda's love.*
Hier. *Let then Perseda on your grace attend.*

Bal. *She shall not wait on me, but I on her:*
Drawn by the influence of her lights, I yield.
But let my friend, the Rhodian knight, come forth,
Erasto, dearer than my life to me,
That he may see Perseda, my belov'd.

(*Enter* Erasto.)

King. Here comes Lorenzo: look upon the plot,
And tell me, brother, what part plays he?
Bel. *Ah, my Erasto, welcome to Perseda.*
Lor. *Thrice happy is Erasto that thou liv'st;*
Rhodes' loss is nothing to Erasto's joy;
Sith his Perseda lives, his life survives.
Bal. *Ah, bashaw, here is love between Erasto*
And fair Perseda, sovereign of my soul.
Hier. *Remove Erasto, mighty Soliman,*
And then Perseda will be quickly won.
Bal. *Erasto is my friend; and while he lives,*
Perseda never will remove her love.
Hier. *Let not Erasto live to grieve great Soliman.*
Bal. *Dear is Erasto in our princely eye.*
Hier. *But if he be your rival, let him die.*
Bal. *Why, let him die! — so love commandeth me.*
Yet grieve I that Erasto should so die.
Hier. *Erasto, Soliman saluteth thee,*
And lets thee wit by me his highness' will,
Which is, thou shouldst be thus employ'd.
(*Stabs him.*)
Bel. *Ay me!*
Erasto! See, Soliman, Erasto's slain!
Bal. *Yet liveth Soliman to comfort thee.*
Fair queen of beauty, let not favour die,
But with a gracious eye behold his grief
That with Perseda's beauty is increas'd,
If by Perseda his grief be not releas'd.
Bel. *Tyrant, desist soliciting vain suits;*
Relentless are mine ears to thy laments,
As thy butcher is pitiless and base,
Which seiz'd on my Erasto, harmless knight.
Yet by thy power thou thinkest to command,
And to thy power Perseda doth obey;
But, were she able, thus she would revenge
Thy treacheries on thee, ignoble prince:
(*Stabs him.*)
And on herself she would be thus reveng'd.
(*Stabs herself.*)
King. Well said! — Old marshal, this was bravely done!
Hier. But Bel-imperia plays Perseda well!
Vic. Were this in earnest, Bel-imperia,
You would be better to my son than so.
King. But now what follows for Hieronimo?
Hier. Marry, this follows for Hieronimo:
Here break we off our sundry languages,
And thus conclude I in our vulgar tongue.
Haply you think — but bootless are your thoughts —
That this is fabulously counterfeit,
And that we do as all tragedians do, —
To die to-day, for fashioning our scene,
The death of Ajax or some Roman peer,
And in a minute starting up again,
Revive to please to-morrow's audience.
No, princes; know I am Hieronimo,
The hopeless father of a hapless son,
Whose tongue is tun'd to tell his latest tale,
Not to excuse gross errors in the play.
I see, your looks urge instance of these words;
Behold the reason urging me to this!
(*Shows his dead son.*)
See here my show, look on this spectacle!
Here lay my hope, and here my hope hath end;
Here lay my heart, and here my heart was slain;
Here lay my treasure, here my treasure lost;
Here lay my bliss, and here my bliss bereft:
But hope, heart, treasure, joy, and bliss,
All fled, fail'd, died, yea, all decay'd with this.
From forth these wounds came breath that gave me life;
They murd'red me that made these fatal marks.
The cause was love, whence grew this mortal hate;
The hate, Lorenzo and young Balthazar;
The love, my son to Bel-imperia.
But night, the coverer of accursed crimes,
With pitchy silence hush'd these traitors' harms,

And lent them leave, for they had sorted leisure
To take advantage in my garden-plot
Upon my son, my dear Horatio.
There merciless they butcher'd up my boy,
In black, dark night, to pale, dim, cruel death.
He shrieks: I heard — and yet, methinks, I hear —
His dismal outcry echo in the air.
With soonest speed I hasted to the noise,
Where hanging on a tree I found my son,
Through-girt with wounds, and slaught'red as you see.
And griev'd I, think you, at this spectacle?
Speak, Portuguese, whose loss resembles mine:
If thou canst weep upon thy Balthazar,
'Tis like I wail'd for my Horatio.
And you, my lord, whose reconciled son
March'd in a net, and thought himself unseen,
And rated me for brainsick lunacy,
With "God amend that mad Hieronimo!" —
How can you brook our play's catastrophe?
And here behold this bloody handkercher,
Which at Horatio's death I weeping dipp'd
Within the river of his bleeding wounds:
It as propitious, see, I have reserved,
And never hath it left my bloody heart,
Soliciting remembrance of my vow
With these, O, these accursed murderers:
Which now perform'd, my heart is satisfied.
And to this end the bashaw I became
That might revenge me on Lorenzo's life,
Who therefore was appointed to the part,
And was to represent the knight of Rhodes,
That I might kill him more conveniently.
So, Viceroy, was this Balthazar, thy son,
That Soliman which Bel-imperia,
In person of Perseda, murdered;
Solely appointed to that tragic part
That she might slay him that offended her.
Poor Bel-imperia miss'd her part in this:
For though the story saith she should have died,
Yet I of kindness, and of care to her,
Did otherwise determine of her end;
But love of him whom they did hate too much
Did urge her resolution to be such.
And, princes, now behold Hieronimo,
Author and actor in this tragedy,
Bearing his latest fortune in his fist;
And will as resolute conclude his part,
As any of the actors gone before.
And, gentles, thus I end my play;
Urge no more words: I have no more to say. (*He runs to hang himself.*)

King. O hearken, Viceroy! Hold, Hieronimo!
Brother, my nephew and thy son are slain!

Vic. We are betray'd; my Balthazar is slain!
Break ope the doors; run, save Hieronimo.

(*They break in and hold* Hieronimo.)

Hieronimo, do but inform the king of these events;
Upon mine honour, thou shalt have no harm.

Hier. Viceroy, I will not trust thee with my life,
Which I this day have offered to my son.
Accursed wretch!
Why stay'st thou him that was resolv'd to die?

King. Speak, traitor! damned, bloody murderer, speak!
For now I have thee, I will make thee speak.
Why hast thou done this undeserving deed?

Vic. Why hast thou murdered my Balthazar?

Cast. Why hast thou butchered both my children thus?

Hier. O, good words!
As dear to me was my Horatio
As yours, or yours, or yours, my lord, to you.
My guiltless son was by Lorenzo slain,
And by Lorenzo and that Balthazar
Am I at last revenged thoroughly,
Upon whose souls may heavens be yet aveng'd
With greater far than these afflictions.

Cast. But who were thy confederates in this?

Vic. That was thy daughter Bel-imperia;

For by her hand my Balthazar was slain:
I saw her stab him.
King. Why speak'st thou not?
Hier. What lesser liberty can kings afford
Than harmless silence? Then afford it me.
Sufficeth, I may not, nor I will not tell thee.
King. Fetch forth the tortures: traitor as thou art,
I'll make thee tell.
Hier. Indeed,
Thou may'st torment me as his wretched son
Hath done in murd'ring my Horatio;
But never shalt thou force me to reveal
The thing which I have vow'd inviolate.
And therefore, in despite of all thy threats,
Pleas'd with their deaths, and eas'd with their revenge,
First take my tongue, and afterwards my heart. (*He bites out his tongue.*)
[Hier. *But are you sure they are dead?*
Cast. *Ay, slave, too sure.*
Hier. *What, and yours too?*
Vic. *Ay, all are dead; not one of them survive.*
Hier. *Nay, then I care not; come, and we shall be friends;*
Let us lay our heads together:
See, here's a goodly noose will hold them all.
Vic. *O damned devil, how secure he is!*
Hier. *Secure? Why, dost thou wonder at it?*
I tell thee, Viceroy, this day I have seen revenge,
And in that sight am grown a prouder monarch,
Than ever sat under the crown of Spain.
Had I as many lives as there be stars,
As many heavens to go to, as those lives,
I'd give them all, ay, and my soul to boot,
But I would see thee ride in this red pool.
Cast. *But who were thy confederates in this?*
Vic. *That was thy daughter Bel-imperia;*
For by her hand my Balthazar was slain:
I saw her stab him.
Hier. *O, good words!*
As dear to me was my Horatio,
As yours, or yours, or yours, my lord, to you.
My guiltless son was by Lorenzo slain,
And by Lorenzo and that Balthazar
Am I at last revenged thoroughly,
Upon whose souls may heavens be yet avenged
With greater far than these afflictions.
Methinks, since I grew inward with revenge,
I cannot look with scorn enough on death.
King. *What, dost thou mock us, slave? — Bring tortures forth.*
Hier. *Do, do, do: and meantime I'll torture you.*
You had a son, as I take it; and your son
Should ha' been married to your daughter:
Ha, was it not so? — You had a son too,
He was my liege's nephew; he was proud
And politic; had he liv'd, he might ha' come
To wear the crown of Spain, I think 'twas so: —
'Twas I that kill'd him; look you, this same hand,
'Twas it that stabb'd his heart — do ye see? this hand —
For one Horatio, if you ever knew him: a youth,
One that they hang'd up in his father's garden;
One that did force your valiant son to yield,
While your more valiant son did take him prisoner.
Vic. *Be deaf, my senses; I can hear no more.*
King. *Fall, heaven, and cover us with thy sad ruins.*
Cast. *Roll all the world within thy pitchy cloud.*
Hier. *Now do I applaud what I have acted.*
Nunc iners cadat manus!
Now to express the rupture of my part, —
First take my tongue, and afterward my heart.]
King. O monstrous resolution of a wretch!
See, Viceroy, he hath bitten forth his tongue,
Rather than to reveal what we requir'd.
Cast. Yet can he write.
King. And if in this he satisfy us not,
We will devise th' extremest kind of death
That ever was invented for a wretch.
(*Then he makes signs for a knife to mend his pen.*)

CAST. O, he would have a knife to mend his pen.
VIC. Here, and advise thee that thou write the troth. —
Look to my brother! save Hieronimo!
(*He with a knife stabs the* DUKE *and himself.*)
KING. What age hath ever heard such monstrous deeds?
My brother, and the whole succeeding hope
That Spain expected after my decease!
Go, bear his body hence, that we may mourn
The loss of our beloved brother's death,
That he may be entomb'd whate'er befall.
I am the next, the nearest, last of all.
VIC. And thou, Don Pedro, do the like for us:
Take up our hapless son, untimely slain;
Set me with him, and he with woeful me,
Upon the main-mast of a ship unmann'd,
And let the wind and tide haul me along
To Scylla's barking and untamed gulf,
Or to the loathsome pool of Acheron,
To weep my want for my sweet Balthazar:
Spain hath no refuge for a Portingale.
(*The trumpets sound a dead march; the* KING OF SPAIN *mourning after his brother's body, and the* KING OF PORTINGAL *bearing the body of his son.*)

[CHORUS.]

(*Enter* GHOST *and* REVENGE.)

GHOST. Ay, now my hopes have end in their effects,
When blood and sorrow finish my desires:
Horatio murdered in his father's bower;
Vild Serberine by Pedringano slain;
False Pedringano hang'd by quaint device;
Fair Isabella by herself misdone;
Prince Balthazar by Bel-imperia stabb'd;
The Duke of Castile and his wicked son
Both done to death by old Hieronimo;
My Bel-imperia fall'n as Dido fell,
And good Hieronimo slain by himself:
Ay, these were spectacles to please my soul!
Now will I beg at lovely Proserpine
That, by the virtue of her princely doom,
I may consort my friends in pleasing sort,
And on my foes work just and sharp revenge.
I'll lead my friend Horatio through those fields,
Where never-dying wars are still inur'd;
I'll lead fair Isabella to that train,
Where pity weeps, but never feeleth pain;
I'll lead my Bel-imperia to those joys,
That vestal virgins and fair queens possess;
I'll lead Hieronimo where Orpheus plays,
Adding sweet pleasure to eternal days.
But say, Revenge, for thou must help, or none,
Against the rest how shall my hate be shown?
REV. This hand shall hale them down to deepest hell,
Where none but Furies, bugs, and tortures dwell.
GHOST. Then, sweet Revenge, do this at my request:
Let me be judge, and doom them to unrest.
Let loose poor Tityus from the vulture's gripe,
And let Don Cyprian supply his room;
Place Don Lorenzo on Ixion's wheel,
And let the lover's endless pains surcease
(Juno forgets old wrath, and grants him ease);
Hang Balthazar about Chimaera's neck,
And let him there bewail his bloody love,
Repining at our joys that are above;
Let Serberine go roll the fatal stone,
And take from Sisyphus his endless moan;
False Pedringano, for his treachery,
Let him be dragg'd through boiling Acheron,
And there live, dying still in endless flames,
Blaspheming gods and all their holy names.
REV. Then haste we down to meet thy friends and foes:
To place thy friends in ease, the rest in woes;
For here though death hath end their misery,
I'll there begin their endless tragedy.
(*Exeunt.*)

THE TROUBLESOME REIGN AND LAMENTABLE DEATH OF EDWARD THE SECOND

By CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

(1594)

[DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

King Edward the Second.
Prince Edward, his Son, afterwards King Edward the Third.
Earl of Kent, Brother to King Edward the Second.
Gaveston.
Archbishop of Canterbury
Bishop of Coventry.
Bishop of Winchester.
Warwick.
Lancaster.
Pembroke.
Arundel.
Leicester.
Berkeley.
Mortimer, the elder.
Mortimer, the younger, his Nephew.
Spencer, the elder.
Spencer, the younger, his Son.
Baldock.
Beaumont.
Trussel.
Gurney.
Matrevis.
Lightborn.
Sir John of Hainault.
Levune.
Rice ap Howell.
Abbot, Monks, Herald, Lords, Poor Men, James, Mower, Champion, Messengers, Soldiers, and Attendants.

Queen Isabella, Wife to King Edward the Second.
Niece to King Edward the Second, daughter to the Duke of Gloucester.
Ladies.]

THE TROUBLESOME REIGN AND LAMENTABLE DEATH OF EDWARD THE SECOND

[ACT I]

[SCENE I.]

(*Enter* GAVESTON, *reading on a letter that was brought him from the King.*)

GAVESTON. "My father is deceas'd! Come, Gaveston,
And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend."
Ah! words that make me surfeit with delight!
What greater bliss can hap to Gaveston
Than live and be the favourite of a king!
Sweet prince, I come; these, these thy amorous lines
Might have enforc'd me to have swum from France,
And, like Leander, gasp'd upon the sand,
So thou would'st smile, and take me in thine arms.
The sight of London to my exil'd eyes
Is as Elysium to a new-come soul;
Not that I love the city, or the men,
But that it harbours him I hold so dear —
The king, upon whose bosom let me die,
And with the world be still at enmity.
What need the arctic people love starlight,
To whom the sun shines both by day and night?
Farewell base stooping to the lordly peers!
My knee shall bow to none but to the king.
As for the multitude, that are but sparks
Rak'd up in embers of their poverty; —
Tanti. I'll fawn first on the wind
That glanceth at my lips, and flyeth away.

(*Enter three Poor Men.*)

But how now, what are these?
POOR MEN. Such as desire your worship's service.
GAV. What canst thou do?
1 P. MAN. I can ride.
GAV. But I have no horses. — What art thou?
2 P. MAN. A traveller.
GAV. Let me see: thou would'st do well
To wait at my trencher and tell me lies at dinner time;
And as I like your discoursing, I'll have you. —
And what art thou?
3 P. MAN. A soldier that hath serv'd against the Scot.
GAV. Why, there are hospitals for such as you.
I have no war, and therefore, sir, begone.
3 P. MAN. Farewell, and perish by a soldier's hand,
That would'st reward them with an hospital.
GAV. [*aside*]. Ay, ay, these words of his move me as much
As if a goose should play the porpentine,
And dart her plumes, thinking to pierce my breast.
But yet it is no pain to speak men fair;
I'll flatter these, and make them live in hope. —
You know that I came lately out of France,
And yet I have not view'd my lord the king;
If I speed well, I'll entertain you all.
ALL. We thank your worship.
GAV. I have some business: leave me to myself.
ALL. We will wait here about the court.
(*Exeunt.*)
GAV. Do. — These are not men for me:
I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant king which way I please.
Music and poetry is his delight;

Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad;
My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance an antic hay.
Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,
And in his sportful hands an olive tree,
To hide those parts which men delight to see,
Shall bathe him in a spring; and there hard by,
One like Actaeon peeping through the grove
Shall by the angry goddess be transform'd,
And running in the likeness of an hart
By yelping hounds pull'd down, and seem to die; —
Such things as these best please his majesty,
My lord. — Here comes the king, and the nobles
From the parliament. I'll stand aside. [*Retires.*]

(*Enter* King [Edward], Lancaster, the Elder Mortimer, Young Mortimer; Edmund, Earl of Kent; Guy, Earl of Warwick, *and* [*Attendants*].)

K. Edw. Lancaster!
Lan. My lord.
Gav. [*aside*]. That Earl of Lancaster do I abhor.
K. Edw. Will you not grant me this? — [*Aside.*] In spite of them
I'll have my will; and these two Mortimers,
That cross me thus, shall know I am displeas'd.
E. Mor. If you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston.
Gav. [*aside*]. That villain Mortimer! I'll be his death.
Y. Mor. Mine uncle here, this earl, and I myself
Were sworn to your father at his death,
That he should ne'er return into the realm;
And know, my lord, ere I will break my oath,
This sword of mine, that should offend your foes,
Shall sleep within the scabbard at thy need,
And underneath thy banners march who will,
For Mortimer will hang his armour up.
Gav. [*aside*]. *Mort Dieu!*
K. Edw. Well, Mortimer, I'll make thee rue these words.
Beseems it thee to contradict thy king?
Frown'st thou thereat, aspiring Lancaster?
The sword shall plane the furrows of thy brows,
And hew these knees that now are grown so stiff.
I will have Gaveston; and you shall know
What danger 'tis to stand against your king.
Gav. [*aside*]. Well done, Ned!
Lan. My lord, why do you thus incense your peers,
That naturally would love and honour you
But for that base and obscure Gaveston?
Four earldoms have I, besides Lancaster —
Derby, Salisbury, Lincoln, Leicester, —
These will I sell, to give my soldiers pay,
Ere Gaveston shall stay within the realm;
Therefore, if he be come, expel him straight.
Kent. Barons and earls, your pride hath made me mute;
But now I'll speak, and to the proof, I hope.
I do remember, in my father's days,
Lord Percy of the north, being highly mov'd,
Braved Moubery in presence of the king;
For which, had not his highness lov'd him well,
He should have lost his head; but with his look
The undaunted spirit of Percy was appeas'd,
And Moubery and he were reconcil'd:
Yet dare you brave the king unto his face? —

Brother, revenge it, and let these their heads
Preach upon poles, for trespass of their tongues.
War. O, our heads!
K. Edw. Ay, yours; and therefore I would wish you grant —
War. Bridle thy anger, gentle Mortimer.
Y. Mor. I cannot, nor I will not; I must speak. —
Cousin, our hands I hope shall fence our heads,
And strike off his that makes you threaten us.
Come, uncle, let us leave the brain-sick king,
And henceforth parle with our naked swords.
E. Mor. Wiltshire hath men enough to save our heads.
War. All Warwickshire will love him for my sake.
Lan. And northward Gaveston hath many friends. —
Adieu, my lord; and either change your mind,
Or look to see the throne, where you should sit,
To float in blood; and at thy wanton head,
The glozing head of thy base minion thrown.
(*Exeunt* [*all except* King Edward, Kent, Gaveston, *and Attendants*].)
K. Edw. I cannot brook these haughty menaces.
Am I a king, and must be overrul'd? —
Brother, display my ensigns in the field;
I'll bandy with the barons and the earls,
And either die or live with Gaveston.
Gav. I can no longer keep me from my lord. [*Comes forward.*]
K. Edw. What, Gaveston! welcome! — Kiss not my hand —
Embrace me, Gaveston, as I do thee.
Why should'st thou kneel? Know'st thou not who I am?
Thy friend, thyself, another Gaveston!
Not Hylas was more mourn'd of Hercules,
Than thou hast been of me since thy exile.
Gav. And since I went from hence, no soul in hell
Hath felt more torment than poor Gaveston.
K. Edw. I know it. — Brother, welcome home my friend.
Now let the treacherous Mortimers conspire,
And that high-minded Earl of Lancaster:
I have my wish, in that I joy thy sight;
And sooner shall the sea o'erwhelm my land,
Than bear the ship that shall transport thee hence.
I here create thee Lord High Chamberlain,
Chief Secretary to the state and me,
Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man.
Gav. My lord, these titles far exceed my worth.
Kent. Brother, the least of these may well suffice
For one of greater birth than Gaveston.
K. Edw. Cease, brother, for I cannot brook these words.
Thy worth, sweet friend, is far above my gifts.
Therefore, to equal it, receive my heart.
If for these dignities thou be envied,
I'll give thee more; for, but to honour thee,
Is Edward pleas'd with kingly regiment.
Fear'st thou thy person? Thou shalt have a guard.
Wantest thou gold? Go to my treasury.
Wouldst thou be lov'd and fear'd? Receive my seal;
Save or condemn, and in our name command
Whatso thy mind effects, or fancy likes,
Gav. It shall suffice me to enjoy your love,
Which whiles I have, I think myself as great
As Caesar riding in the Roman street,
With captive kings at his triumphant car.

(*Enter the* Bishop of Coventry.)

K. Edw. Whither goes my lord of Coventry so fast?
B. of Cov. To celebrate your father's exequies.
But is that wicked Gaveston return'd?

K. Edw. Ay, priest, and lives to be reveng'd on thee,
That wert the only cause of his exile.
Gav. 'Tis true; and but for reverence of these robes,
Thou should'st not plod one foot beyond this place.
B. of Cov. I did no more than I was bound to do;
And, Gaveston, unless thou be reclaim'd,
As then I did incense the parliament,
So will I now, and thou shalt back to France.
Gav. Saving your reverence, you must pardon me.
K. Edw. Throw off his golden mitre, rend his stole,
And in the channel christen him anew.
Kent. Ah, brother, lay not violent hands on him!
For he'll complain unto the see of Rome.
Gav. Let him complain unto the see of hell;
I'll be reveng'd on him for my exile.
K. Edw. No, spare his life, but seize upon his goods.
Be thou lord bishop and receive his rents,
And make him serve thee as thy chaplain.
I give him thee — here, use him as thou wilt.
Gav. He shall to prison, and there die in bolts.
K. Edw. Ay, to the Tower, the Fleet, or where thou wilt.
B. of Cov. For this offence, be thou accurst of God!
K. Edw. Who's there? Convey this priest to the Tower.
B. of Cov. True, true.
K. Edw. But in the meantime, Gaveston, away,
And take possession of his house and goods.
Come, follow me, and thou shalt have my guard
To see it done, and bring thee safe again.
Gav. What should a priest do with so fair a house?
A prison may best beseem his holiness.
[*Exeunt.*]

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* [*on one side*] *both the* Mortimers; [*on the other,*] Warwick *and* Lancaster.)

War. 'Tis true, the bishop is in the Tower,
And goods and body given to Gaveston.
Lan. What! will they tyrannise upon the church?
Ah, wicked king! accursed Gaveston!
This ground, which is corrupted with their steps,
Shall be their timeless sepulchre or mine.
Y. Mor. Well, let that peevish Frenchman guard him sure;
Unless his breast be sword-proof he shall die.
E. Mor. How now! why droops the Earl of Lancaster?
Y. Mor. Wherefore is Guy of Warwick discontent?
Lan. That villain Gaveston is made an earl.
E. Mor. An earl!
War. Ay, and besides Lord Chamberlain of the realm,
And Secretary too, and Lord of Man.
E. Mor. We may not, nor we will not suffer this.
Y. Mor. Why post we not from hence to levy men?
Lan. "My Lord of Cornwall" now at every word!
And happy is the man whom he vouchsafes,
For vailing of his bonnet, one good look.
Thus, arm in arm, the king and he doth march:
Nay more, the guard upon his lordship waits;
And all the court begins to flatter him.
War. Thus leaning on the shoulder of the king,
He nods and scorns and smiles at those that pass.
E. Mor. Doth no man take exceptions at the slave?
Lan. All stomach him, but none dare speak a word.
Y. Mor. Ah, that bewrays their baseness, Lancaster!
Were all the earls and barons of my mind,

We'll hale him from the bosom of the king,
And at the court-gate hang the peasant up,
Who, swoln with venom of ambitious pride,
Will be the ruin of the realm and us.

(*Enter the* [Arch]bishop of Canterbury [*and an Attendant*].)

War. Here comes my lord of Canterbury's grace.
Lan. His countenance bewrays he is displeas'd.
A. of Cant. First were his sacred garments rent and torn,
Then laid they violent hands upon him; next
Himself imprisoned, and his goods asseiz'd:
This certify the Pope; — away, take horse. [*Exit Attend.*]
Lan. My lord, will you take arms against the king?
A. of Cant. What need I? God himself is up in arms,
When violence is offered to the church.
Y. Mor. Then will you join with us, that be his peers,
To banish or behead that Gaveston?
A. of Cant. What else, my lords? for it concerns me near;
The bishopric of Coventry is his.

(*Enter* Queen [Isabella].)

Y. Mor. Madam, whither walks your majesty so fast?
Q. Isab. Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer,
To live in grief and baleful discontent;
For now my lord the king regards me not,
But dotes upon the love of Gaveston.
He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck,
Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears;
And when I come he frowns, as who should say,
"Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston."
E. Mor. Is it not strange that he is thus bewitch'd?
Y. Mor. Madam, return unto the court again.
That sly inveigling Frenchman we'll exile,
Or lose our lives; and yet, ere that day come,
The king shall lose his crown; for we have power,
And courage too, to be reveng'd at full.
Q. Isab. But yet lift not your swords against the king.
Lan. No; but we will lift Gaveston from hence.
War. And war must be the means, or he'll stay still.
Q. Isab. Then let him stay; for rather than my lord
Shall be oppress'd by civil mutinies,
I will endure a melancholy life,
And let him frolic with his minion.
A. of Cant. My lords, to ease all this, but hear me speak: —
We and the rest, that are his counsellors,
Will meet, and with a general consent
Confirm him banishment with our hands and seals.
Lan. What we confirm the king will frustrate.
Y. Mor. Then may we lawfully revolt from him.
War. But say, my lord, where shall this meeting be?
A. of Cant. At the New Temple.
Y. Mor. Content.
A. of Cant. And, in the meantime, I'll entreat you all
To cross to Lambeth, and there stay with me.
Lan. Come then, let's away.
Y. Mor. Madam, farewell!
Q. Isab. Farewell, sweet Mortimer, and, for my sake,
Forbear to levy arms against the king.
Y. Mor. Ay, if words will serve; if not, I must. [*Exeunt.*]

[Scene III.]

(*Enter* Gaveston *and* Kent.)

Gav. Edmund, the mighty Prince of Lancaster,
That hath more earldoms than an ass can bear,
And both the Mortimers, two goodly men,
With Guy of Warwick, that redoubted knight,

Are gone toward Lambeth — there let them remain! [*Exeunt.*]

[Scene IV.]

(*Enter Nobles* [Lancaster, Warwick, Pembroke, *the* Elder Mortimer, Young Mortimer, *the* Archbishop of Canterbury *and Attendants*].)

Lan. Here is the form of Gaveston's exile:
May it please your lordship to subscribe your name.

A. of Cant. Give me the paper.
[*He subscribes, as do the others after him.*]

Lan. Quick, quick, my lord; I long to write my name.

War. But I long more to see him banish'd hence.

Y. Mor. The name of Mortimer shall fright the king,
Unless he be declin'd from that base peasant.

(*Enter* King [Edward], Gaveston, [*and* Kent].)

K. Edw. What, are you mov'd that Gaveston sits here?
It is our pleasure; we will have it so.

Lan. Your grace doth well to place him by your side,
For nowhere else the new earl is so safe.

E. Mor. What man of noble birth can brook this sight?
Quam male conveniunt!
See what a scornful look the peasant casts!

Pem. Can kingly lions fawn on creeping ants?

War. Ignoble vassal, that like Phaeton
Aspir'st unto the guidance of the sun!

Y. Mor. Their downfall is at hand, their forces down;
We will not thus be fac'd and over-peer'd.

K. Edw. Lay hands on that traitor Mortimer!

E. Mor. Lay hands on that traitor Gaveston!

Kent. Is this the duty that you owe your king?

War. We know our duties — let him know his peers.

K. Edw. Whither will you bear him? Stay, or ye shall die.

E. Mor. We are no traitors; therefore threaten not.

Gav. No, threaten not, my lord, but pay them home!
Were I a king —

Y. Mor. Thou villain, wherefore talk'st thou of a king,
That hardly art a gentleman by birth?

K. Edw. Were he a peasant, being my minion,
I'll make the proudest of you stoop to him.

Lan. My lord, you may not thus disparage us. —
Away, I say, with hateful Gaveston!

E. Mor. And with the Earl of Kent that favours him.
[*Attendants remove* Kent *and* Gaveston.]

K. Edw. Nay, then, lay violent hands upon your king.
Here, Mortimer, sit thou in Edward's throne;
Warwick and Lancaster, wear you my crown.
Was ever king thus over-rul'd as I?

Lan. Learn then to rule us better, and the realm.

Y. Mor. What we have done, our heart-blood shall maintain.

War. Think you that we can brook this upstart pride?

K. Edw. Anger and wrathful fury stops my speech.

A. of Cant. Why are you mov'd? Be patient, my lord,
And see what we your counsellors have done.

Y. Mor. My lords, now let us all be resolute,
And either have our wills, or lose our lives.

K. Edw. Meet you for this, proud over-daring peers?
Ere my sweet Gaveston shall part from me,
This isle shall fleet upon the ocean,
And wander to the unfrequented Inde.

A. of Cant. You know that I am legate to the Pope.
On your allegiance to the see of Rome,
Subscribe, as we have done, to his exile.

Y. Mor. Curse him, if he refuse; and then may we
Depose him and elect another king.
K. Edw. Ay, there it goes! but yet I will not yield.
Curse me, depose me, do the worst you can.
Lan. Then linger not, my lord, but do it straight.
A. of Cant. Remember how the bishop was abus'd!
Either banish him that was the cause thereof,
Or I will presently discharge these lords
Of duty and allegiance due to thee.
K. Edw. [*aside*]. It boots me not to threat; I must speak fair. —
The legate of the Pope will be obey'd.
My lord, you shall be Chancellor of the realm;
Thou, Lancaster, High Admiral of our fleet;
Young Mortimer and his uncle shall be earls;
And you, Lord Warwick, President of the North;
And thou, of Wales. If this content you not,
Make several kingdoms of this monarchy,
And share it equally amongst you all,
So I may have some nook or corner left,
To frolic with my dearest Gaveston.
A. of Cant. Nothing shall alter us, we are resolv'd.
Lan. Come, come, subscribe.
Y. Mor. Why should you love him whom the world hates so?
K. Edw. Because he loves me more than all the world.
Ah, none but rude and savage-minded men
Would seek the ruin of my Gaveston;
You that be noble-born should pity him.
War. You that are princely-born should shake him off.
For shame subscribe, and let the lown depart.
E. Mor. Urge him, my lord.
A. of Cant. Are you content to banish him the realm?
K. Edw. I see I must, and therefore am content.
Instead of ink, I'll write it with my tears. [*Subscribes.*]
Y. Mor. The king is love-sick for his minion.
K. Edw. 'Tis done; and now, accursed hand, fall off!
Lan. Give it me; I'll have it publish'd in the streets.
Y. Mor. I'll see him presently despatch'd away.
A. of Cant. Now is my heart at ease.
War. And so is mine.
Pem. This will be good news to the common sort.
E. Mor. Be it or no, he shall not linger here.
(*Exeunt all except* King Edward.)
K. Edw. How fast they run to banish him I love!
They would not stir, were it to do me good.
Why should a king be subject to a priest?
Proud Rome! that hatchest such imperial grooms,
For these thy superstitious taper-lights,
Wherewith thy antichristian churches blaze,
I'll fire thy crazed buildings, and enforce
The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground!
With slaughtered priests make Tiber's channel swell,
And banks rais'd higher with their sepulchres!
As for the peers, that back the clergy thus,
If I be king, not one of them shall live.

(*Re-enter* Gaveston.)

Gav. My lord, I hear it whispered everywhere,
That I am banish'd, and must fly the land.
K. Edw. 'Tis true, sweet Gaveston — O! were it false!
The legate of the Pope will have it so,
And thou must hence, or I shall be depos'd.
But I will reign to be reveng'd of them;
And therefore, sweet friend, take it patiently.
Live where thou wilt, I'll send thee gold enough;
And long thou shalt not stay, or if thou dost,

I'll come to thee; my love shall ne'er decline.
Gav. Is all my hope turn'd to this hell of grief?
K. Edw. Rend not my heart with thy too piercing words:
Thou from this land, I from myself am banish'd.
Gav. To go from hence grieves not poor Gaveston;
But to forsake you, in whose gracious looks
The blessedness of Gaveston remains,
For nowhere else seeks he felicity.
K. Edw. And only this torments my wretched soul
That, whether I will or no, thou must depart.
Be governor of Ireland in my stead,
And there abide till fortune call thee home.
Here take my picture, and let me wear thine; [*They exchange pictures.*]
O, might I keep thee here as I do this,
Happy were I! but now most miserable!
Gav. 'Tis something to be pitied of a king.
K. Edw. Thou shalt not hence — I'll hide thee, Gaveston.
Gav. I shall be found, and then 'twill grieve me more.
K. Edw. Kind words and mutual talk makes our grief greater;
Therefore, with dumb embracement, let us part. —
Stay, Gaveston, I cannot leave thee thus.
Gav. For every look, my lord drops down a tear.
Seeing I must go, do not renew my sorrow.
K. Edw. The time is little that thou hast to stay,
And, therefore, give me leave to look my fill.
But come, sweet friend, I'll bear thee on thy way.
Gav. The peers will frown.
K. Edw. I pass not for their anger. — Come let's go;
O that we might as well return as go.

(*Enter* Edmund *and* Queen Isabella.)

Q. Isab. Whither goes my lord?
K. Edw. Fawn not on me, French strumpet! Get thee gone!
Q. Isab. On whom but on my husband should I fawn?
Gav. On Mortimer! with whom, ungentle queen —
I say no more. Judge you the rest, my lord.
Q. Isab. In saying this, thou wrong'st me, Gaveston.
Is't not enough that thou corrupt'st my lord,
And art a bawd to his affections,
But thou must call mine honour thus in question?
Gav. I mean not so; your grace must pardon me.
K. Edw. Thou art too familiar with that Mortimer,
And by thy means is Gaveston exil'd;
But I would wish thee reconcile the lords,
Or thou shalt ne'er be reconcil'd to me.
Q. Isab. Your highness knows it lies not in my power.
K. Edw. Away then! touch me not. — Come, Gaveston.
Q. Isab. Villain! 'tis thou that robb'st me of my lord.
Gav. Madam, 'tis you that rob me of my lord.
K. Edw. Speak not unto her; let her droop and pine.
Q. Isab. Wherein, my lord, have I deserv'd these words?
Witness the tears that Isabella sheds,
Witness this heart, that, sighing for thee, breaks,
How dear my lord is to poor Isabel.
K. Edw. And witness Heaven how dear thou art to me!
There weep; for till my Gaveston be repeal'd,
Assure thyself thou com'st not in my sight.
(*Exeunt* Edward *and* Gaveston.)
Q. Isab. O miserable and distressed queen!
Would, when I left sweet France and was embark'd,

That charming Circes, walking on the waves,
Had chang'd my shape, or at the marriage-day
The cup of Hymen had been full of poison,
Or with those arms that twin'd about my neck
I had been stifled, and not liv'd to see
The king my lord thus to abandon me!
Like frantic Juno will I fill the earth
With ghastly murmur of my sighs and cries;
For never doted Jove on Ganymede
So much as he on cursed Gaveston.
But that will more exasperate his wrath;
I must entreat him, I must speak him fair,
And be a means to call home Gaveston.
And yet he'll ever dote on Gaveston;
And so am I for ever miserable.

(*Re-enter Nobles* [LANCASTER, WARWICK, PEMBROKE, *the* ELDER MORTIMER, *and* YOUNG MORTIMER] *to the* QUEEN.)

LAN. Look where the sister of the King of France
Sits wringing of her hands, and beats her breast!
WAR. The king, I fear, hath ill-entreated her.
PEM. Hard is the heart that injures such a saint.
Y. MOR. I know 'tis 'long of Gaveston she weeps.
E. MOR. Why? He is gone.
Y. MOR. Madam, how fares your grace?
Q. ISAB. Ah, Mortimer! now breaks the king's hate forth,
And he confesseth that he loves me not.
Y. MOR. Cry quittance, madam, then; and love not him.
Q. ISAB. No, rather will I die a thousand deaths!
And yet I love in vain; — he'll ne'er love me.
LAN. Fear ye not, madam; now his minion's gone,
His wanton humour will be quickly left.
Q. ISAB. O never, Lancaster! I am enjoin'd
To sue upon you all for his repeal;
This wills my lord, and this must I perform,
Or else be banish'd from his highness' presence.
LAN. For his repeal? Madam, he comes not back,
Unless the sea cast up his shipwrack'd body.
WAR. And to behold so sweet a sight as that,
There's none here but would run his horse to death.
Y. MOR. But, madam, would you have us call him home?
Q. ISAB. Ay, Mortimer, for till he be restor'd,
The angry king hath banish'd me the court;
And, therefore, as thou lov'st and tend'rest me,
Be thou my advocate unto these peers.
Y. MOR. What! would you have me plead for Gaveston?
E. MOR. Plead for him he that will, I am resolv'd.
LAN. And so am I, my lord. Dissuade the queen.
Q. ISAB. O Lancaster! let him dissuade the king,
For 'tis against my will he should return.
WAR. Then speak not for him, let the peasant go.
Q. ISAB. 'Tis for myself I speak, and not for him.
PEM. No speaking will prevail, and therefore cease.
Y. MOR. Fair queen, forbear to angle for the fish
Which, being caught, strikes him that takes it dead;
I mean that vile torpedo, Gaveston,
That now, I hope, floats on the Irish seas.
Q. ISAB. Sweet Mortimer, sit down by me awhile,
And I will tell thee reasons of such weight
As thou wilt soon subscribe to his repeal.
Y. MOR. It is impossible; but speak your mind.
Q. ISAB. Then thus, — but none shall hear it but ourselves.
[*Talks to* YOUNG MORTIMER *apart.*]
LAN. My lords, albeit the queen win Mortimer,
Will you be resolute, and hold with me?

E. Mor. Not I, against my nephew.
Pem. Fear not, the queen's words cannot alter him.
War. No? Do but mark how earnestly she pleads!
Lan. And see how coldly his looks make denial!
War. She smiles; now for my life his mind is chang'd!
Lan. I'll rather lose his friendship, I, than grant.
Y. Mor. Well, of necessity it must be so.
My lords, that I abhor base Gaveston,
I hope your honours make no question,
And therefore, though I plead for his repeal,
'Tis not for his sake, but for our avail;
Nay for the realm's behoof, and for the king's.
Lan. Fie, Mortimer, dishonour not thyself!
Can this be true, 'twas good to banish him?
And is this true, to call him home again?
Such reasons make white black, and dark night day.
Y. Mor. My lord of Lancaster, mark the respect.
Lan. In no respect can contraries be true.
Q. Isab. Yet, good my lord, hear what he can allege.
War. All that he speaks is nothing; we are resolv'd.
Y. Mor. Do you not wish that Gaveston were dead?
Pem. I would he were!
Y. Mor. Why, then, my lord, give me but leave to speak.
E. Mor. But, nephew, do not play the sophister.
Y. Mor. This which I urge is of a burning zeal
To mend the king, and do our country good.
Know you not Gaveston hath store of gold,
Which may in Ireland purchase him such friends
As he will front the mightiest of us all?
And whereas he shall live and be belov'd,
'Tis hard for us to work his overthrow.
War. Mark you but that, my lord of Lancaster.
Y. Mor. But were he here, detested as he is,
How easily might some base slave be suborn'd
To greet his lordship with a poniard,
And none so much as blame the murderer,
But rather praise him for that brave attempt,
And in the chronicle enrol his name
For purging of the realm of such a plague!
Pem. He saith true.
Lan. Ay, but how chance this was not done before?
Y. Mor. Because, my lords, it was not thought upon.
Nay, more, when he shall know it lies in us
To banish him, and then to call him home,
'Twill make him vail the top-flag of his pride,
And fear to offend the meanest nobleman.
E. Mor. But how if he do not, nephew?
Y. Mor. Then may we with some colour rise in arms;
For howsoever we have borne it out,
'Tis treason to be up against the king.
So we shall have the people of our side,
Which for his father's sake lean to the king,
But cannot brook a night-grown mushroom,
Such a one as my lord of Cornwall is,
Should bear us down of the nobility.
And when the commons and the nobles join,
'Tis not the king can buckler Gaveston;
We'll pull him from the strongest hold he hath.
My lords, if to perform this I be slack,
Think me as base a groom as Gaveston.
Lan. On that condition, Lancaster will grant.
War. And so will Pembroke and I.
E. Mor. And I.
Y. Mor. In this I count me highly gratified,
And Mortimer will rest at your command.
Q. Isab. And when this favour Isabel forgets,
Then let her live abandon'd and forlorn. —
But see, in happy time, my lord the king,

Having brought the Earl of Cornwall on his way,
Is new return'd. This news will glad him much,
Yet not so much as me. I love him more
Than he can Gaveston; would he lov'd me
But half so much, then were I treble-blest.

(*Re-enter* King Edward, *mourning*.)

K. Edw. He's gone, and for his absence thus I mourn.
Did never sorrow go so near my heart
As doth the want of my sweet Gaveston;
And could my crown's revenue bring him back,
I would freely give it to his enemies,
And think I gain'd, having bought so dear a friend.
Q. Isab. Hark! how he harps upon his minion.
K. Edw. My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers,
And with the noise turns up my giddy brain,
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.
Ah! had some bloodless Fury rose from hell,
And with my kingly sceptre struck me dead,
When I was forc'd to leave my Gaveston!
Lan. *Diablo!* What passions call you these?
Q. Isab. My gracious lord, I come to bring you news.
K. Edw. That you have parley'd with your Mortimer!
Q. Isab. That Gaveston, my lord, shall be repeal'd.
K. Edw. Repeal'd! The news is too sweet to be true!
Q. Isab. But will you love me, if you find it so?
K. Edw. If it be so, what will not Edward do?
Q. Isab. For Gaveston, but not for Isabel.
K. Edw. For thee, fair queen, if thou lov'st Gaveston.
I'll hang a golden tongue about thy neck,
Seeing thou hast pleaded with so good success.
Q. Isab. No other jewels hang about my neck
Than these, my lord; nor let me have more wealth
Than I may fetch from this rich treasury.
O how a kiss revives poor Isabel!
K. Edw. Once more receive my hand; and let this be
A second marriage 'twixt thyself and me.
Q. Isab. And may it prove more happy than the first!
My gentle lord, bespeak these nobles fair,
That wait attendance for a gracious look,
And on their knees salute your majesty.
K. Edw. Courageous Lancaster, embrace thy king!
And, as gross vapours perish by the sun,
Even so let hatred with thy sovereign's smile.
Live thou with me as my companion.
Lan. This salutation overjoys my heart.
K. Edw. Warwick shall be my chiefest counsellor:
These silver hairs will more adorn my court
Than gaudy silks, or rich embroidery.
Chide me, sweet Warwick, if I go astray.
War. Slay me, my lord, when I offend your grace.
K. Edw. In solemn triumphs, and in public shows,
Pembroke shall bear the sword before the king.
Pem. And with this sword Pembroke will fight for you.
K. Edw. But wherefore walks young Mortimer aside?
Be thou commander of our royal fleet;
Or, if that lofty office like thee not,
I make thee here Lord Marshal of the realm.
Y. Mor. My lord, I'll marshal so your enemies,
As England shall be quiet, and you safe.
K. Edw. And as for you, Lord Mortimer of Chirke,
Whose great achievements in our foreign war

Deserves no common place nor mean reward,
Be you the general of the levied troops,
That now are ready to assail the Scots.
E. Mor. In this your grace hath highly honoured me,
For with my nature war doth best agree.
Q. Isab. Now is the King of England rich and strong,
Having the love of his renowned peers.
K. Edw. Ay, Isabel, ne'er was my heart so light.
Clerk of the crown, direct our warrant forth
For Gaveston to Ireland:

[*Enter* Beaumont *with warrant.*]

Beaumont, fly
As fast as Iris or Jove's Mercury.
Beau. It shall be done, my gracious lord. [*Exit.*]
K. Edw. Lord Mortimer, we leave you to your charge.
Now let us in, and feast it royally.
Against our friend the Earl of Cornwall comes,
We'll have a general tilt and tournament;
And then his marriage shall be solemnis'd.
For wot you not that I have made him sure
Unto our cousin, the Earl of Gloucester's heir?
Lan. Such news we hear, my lord.
K. Edw. That day, if not for him, yet for my sake,
Who in the triumph will be challenger,
Spare for no cost; we will requit your love.
War. In this, or aught, your highness shall command us.
K. Edw. Thanks, gentle Warwick: come, let's in and revel.
(*Exeunt all except the* Mortimers.)
E. Mor. Nephew, I must to Scotland; thou stayest here.
Leave now t'oppose thyself against the king.
Thou seest by nature he is mild and calm,
And seeing his mind so dotes on Gaveston,
Let him without controlment have his will.
The mightiest kings have had their minions:
Great Alexander loved Hephestion;
The conquering Hercules for Hylas wept;
And for Patroclus stern Achilles droopt:
And not kings only, but the wisest men:
The Roman Tully lov'd Octavius;
Grave Socrates, wild Alcibiades.
Then let his grace, whose youth is flexible,
And promiseth as much as we can wish,
Freely enjoy that vain, light-headed earl;
For riper years will wean him from such toys.
Y. Mor. Uncle, his wanton humour grieves not me;
But this I scorn, that one so basely born
Should by his sovereign's favour grow so pert,
And riot it with the treasure of the realm.
While soldiers mutiny for want of pay,
He wears a lord's revenue on his back,
And Midas-like, he jets it in the court,
With base outlandish cullions at his heels,
Whose proud fantastic liveries make such show
As if that Proteus, god of shapes, appear'd.
I have not seen a dapper Jack so brisk;
He wears a short Italian hooded cloak
Larded with pearl, and, in his Tuscan cap,
A jewel of more value than the crown.
While others walk below, the king and he
From out a window laugh at such as we,
And flout our train, and jest at our attire.
Uncle, 'tis this that makes me impatient.
E. Mor. But, nephew, now you see the king is chang'd.
Y. Mor. Then so am I, and live to do him service:
But whiles I have a sword, a hand, a heart,
I will not yield to any such upstart.
You know my mind; come, uncle, let's away. (*Exeunt.*)

[ACT II]

[Scene I.]

(*Enter* [Young] Spencer *and* Baldock.)

Bald. Spencer, seeing that our lord th' Earl of Gloucester's dead,
Which of the nobles dost thou mean to serve?

Y. Spen. Not Mortimer, nor any of his side,
Because the king and he are enemies.
Baldock, learn this of me, a factious lord
Shall hardly do himself good, much less us;
But he that hath the favour of a king,
May with one word advance us while we live.
The liberal Earl of Cornwall is the man
On whose good fortune Spencer's hope depends.
Bald. What, mean you then to be his follower?
Y. Spen. No, his companion; for he loves me well,
And would have once preferr'd me to the king.
Bald. But he is banish'd; there's small hope of him.
Y. Spen. Ay, for a while; but, Baldock, mark the end.
A friend of mine told me in secrecy
That he's repeal'd, and sent for back again;
And even now a post came from the court
With letters to our lady from the king;
And as she read she smil'd, which makes me think
It is about her lover Gaveston.
Bald. 'Tis like enough; for since he was exil'd
She neither walks abroad, nor comes in sight.
But I had thought the match had been broke off,
And that his banishment had chang'd her mind.
Y. Spen. Our lady's first love is not wavering;
My life for thine, she will have Gaveston.
Bald. Then hope I by her means to be preferr'd,
Having read unto her since she was a child.
Y. Spen. Then, Baldock, you must cast the scholar off,
And learn to court it like a gentleman.
'Tis not a black coat and a little band,
A velvet-cap'd coat, fac'd before with serge,
And smelling to a nosegay all the day,
Or holding of a napkin in your hand,
Or saying a long grace at a table's end,
Or making low legs to a nobleman,
Or looking downward with your eyelids close,
And saying, "Truly, an't may please your honour,"
Can get you any favour with great men;
You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute,
And now and then stab, as occasion serves.
Bald. Spencer, thou know'st I hate such formal toys,
And use them but of mere hypocrisy.
Mine old lord whiles he liv'd was so precise,
That he would take exceptions at my buttons,
And being like pin's heads, blame me for the bigness;
Which made me curate-like in mine attire,
Though inwardly licentious enough
And apt for any kind of villainy.
I am none of these common pedants, I,
That cannot speak without *propterea quod.*
Y. Spen. But one of those that saith *quandoquidem*,
And hath a special gift to form a verb.
Bald. Leave off this jesting, here my lady comes.

(*Enter the Lady* [King Edward's *Niece*].)

Niece. The grief for his exile was not so much
As is the joy of his returning home.
This letter came from my sweet Gaveston: —
What need'st thou, love, thus to excuse thyself?
I know thou couldst not come and visit me.
[*Reads.*] "I will not long be from thee, though I die."
This argues the entire love of my lord;
[*Reads.*] "When I forsake thee, death seize on my heart:"
But stay thee here where Gaveston shall sleep.
[*Puts the letter into her bosom.*]
Now to the letter of my lord the king. —
He wills me to repair unto the court,
And meet my Gaveston. Why do I stay,
Seeing that he talks thus of my marriage-day?

Who's there? Baldock!
See that my coach be ready, I must hence.
BALD. It shall be done, madam.
NIECE. And meet me at the park-pale presently. (*Exit* BALDOCK.)
Spencer, stay you and bear me company,
For I have joyful news to tell thee of.
My lord of Cornwall is a-coming over,
And will be at the court as soon as we.
Y. SPEN. I knew the king would have him home again.
NIECE. If all things sort out as I hope they will,
Thy service, Spencer, shall be thought upon.
Y. SPEN. I humbly thank your ladyship.
NIECE. Come, lead the way; I long till I am there. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE II.]

(*Enter* KING EDWARD, QUEEN ISABELLA, KENT, LANCASTER, YOUNG MORTIMER, WARWICK, PEMBROKE, *and Attendants.*)

K. EDW. The wind is good, I wonder why he stays;
I fear me he is wrack'd upon the sea.
Q. ISAB. Look, Lancaster, how passionate he is,
And still his mind runs on his minion!
LAN. My lord,—
K. EDW. How now! what news? Is Gaveston arriv'd?
Y. MOR. Nothing but Gaveston!— What means your grace?
You have matters of more weight to think upon;
The King of France sets foot in Normandy.
K. EDW. A trifle! we'll expel him when we please.
But tell me, Mortimer, what's thy device
Against the stately triumph we decreed?
Y. MOR. A homely one, my lord, not worth the telling.
K. EDW. Pray thee let me know it.
Y. MOR. But, seeing you are so desirous, thus it is:
A lofty cedar-tree, fair flourishing,
On whose top-branches kingly eagles perch,
And by the bark a canker creeps me up,
And gets into the highest bough of all:
The motto, *Aeque tandem.*
K. EDW. And what is yours, my lord of Lancaster?
LAN. My lord, mine's more obscure than Mortimer's.
Pliny reports there is a flying fish
Which all the other fishes deadly hate,
And therefore, being pursued, it takes the air:
No sooner is it up, but there's a fowl
That seizeth it; this fish, my lord, I bear:
The motto this: *Undique mors est.*
K. EDW. Proud Mortimer! ungentle Lancaster!
Is this the love you bear your sovereign?
Is this the fruit your reconcilement bears?
Can you in words make show of amity,
And in your shields display your rancorous minds!
What call you this but private libelling
Against the Earl of Cornwall and my brother?
Q. ISAB. Sweet husband, be content, they all love you.
K. EDW. They love me not that hate my Gaveston.
I am that cedar, shake me not too much;
And you the eagles; soar ye ne'er so high,
I have the jesses that will pull you down;
And *Aeque tandem* shall that canker cry
Unto the proudest peer of Britainy.
Though thou compar'st him to a flying fish,
And threatenest death whether he rise or fall,
'Tis not the hugest monster of the sea,
Nor foulest harpy that shall swallow him.
Y. MOR. If in his absence thus he favours him,
What will he do whenas he shall be present?
LAN. That shall we see; look where his lordship comes.

(*Enter* GAVESTON.)

K. EDW. My Gaveston!
Welcome to Tynemouth! Welcome to thy friend!
Thy absence made me droop and pine away;
For, as the lovers of fair Danae,
When she was lock'd up in a brazen tower,

Desir'd her more, and wax'd outrageous,
So did it fare with me; and now thy sight
Is sweeter far than was thy parting hence
Bitter and irksome to my sobbing heart.
Gav. Sweet lord and king, your speech preventeth mine,
Yet have I words left to express my joy:
The shepherd nipt with biting winter's rage
Frolics not more to see the painted spring,
Than I do to behold your majesty.
K. Edw. Will none of you salute my Gaveston?
Lan. Salute him? yes. Welcome, Lord Chamberlain!
Y. Mor. Welcome is the good Earl of Cornwall!
War. Welcome, Lord Governor of the Isle of Man!
Pem. Welcome, Master Secretary!
Kent. Brother, do you hear them?
K. Edw. Still will these earls and barons use me thus.
Gav. My lord, I cannot brook these injuries.
Q. Isab. [*aside*]. Aye me, poor soul, when these begin to jar.
K. Edw. Return it to their throats, I'll be thy warrant.
Gav. Base, leaden earls, that glory in your birth,
Go sit at home and eat your tenants' beef;
And come not here to scoff at Gaveston,
Whose mounting thoughts did never creep so low
As to bestow a look on such as you.
Lan. Yet I disdain not to do this for you.
[*Draws his sword and offers to stab* Gaveston.]
K. Edw. Treason! treason! where's the traitor?
Pem. Here! here!
K. Edw. Convey hence Gaveston; they'll murder him.
Gav. The life of thee shall salve this foul disgrace.
Y. Mor. Villain! thy life, unless I miss mine aim. [*Wounds* Gaveston.]
Q. Isab. Ah! furious Mortimer, what hast thou done?
Y. Mor. No more than I would answer, were he slain.
[*Exit* Gaveston *with Attendants*]
K. Edw. Yes, more than thou canst answer, though he live.
Dear shall you both abye this riotous deed.
Out of my presence! Come not near the court.
Y. Mor. I'll not be barr'd the court for Gaveston.
Lan. We'll hale him by the ears unto the block.
K. Edw. Look to your own heads; his is sure enough.
War. Look to your own crown, if you back him thus.
Kent. Warwick, these words do ill beseem thy years.
K. Edw. Nay, all of them conspire to cross me thus;
But if I live, I'll tread upon their heads
That think with high looks thus to tread me down.
Come, Edmund, let's away and levy men,
'Tis war that must abate these barons' pride.
(*Exeunt* King [Edward, Queen Isabella, *and* Kent].)
War. Let's to our castles, for the king is mov'd.
Y. Mor. Mov'd may he be, and perish in his wrath!
Lan. Cousin, it is no dealing with him now,
He means to make us stoop by force of arms;
And therefore let us jointly here protest,
To persecute that Gaveston to the death.
Y. Mor. By heaven, the abject villain shall not live!
War. I'll have his blood, or die in seeking it.
Pem. The like oath Pembroke takes.
Lan. And so doth Lancaster. 109
Now send our heralds to defy the king;
And make the people swear to put him down.

(*Enter a Messenger.*)

Y. Mor. Letters! From whence?
Mess. From Scotland, my lord.
[*Giving letters to* Mortimer.]

LAN. Why, how now, cousin, how fares all our friends?
Y. MOR. My uncle's taken prisoner by the Scots.
LAN. We'll have him ransom'd, man; be of good cheer.
Y. MOR. They rate his ransom at five thousand pound.
Who should defray the money but the king,
Seeing he is taken prisoner in his wars?
I'll to the king.
LAN. Do, cousin, and I'll bear thee company.
WAR. Meantime, my lord of Pembroke and myself
Will to Newcastle here, and gather head.
Y. MOR. About it then, and we will follow you.
LAN. Be resolute and full of secrecy.
WAR. I warrant you.
[*Exit with* PEMBROKE.]
Y. MOR. Cousin, and if he will not ransom him,
I'll thunder such a peal into his ears,
As never subject did unto his king.
LAN. Content, I'll bear my part — Holla! who's there?

[*Enter* GUARD.]

Y. MOR. Ay, marry, such a guard as this doth well.
LAN. Lead on the way.
GUARD. Whither will your lordships?
Y. MOR. Whither else but to the king.
GUARD. His highness is dispos'd to be alone.
LAN. Why, so he may, but we will speak to him.
GUARD. You may not in, my lord.
Y. MOR. May we not?

[*Enter* KING EDWARD *and* KENT.]

K. EDW. How now!
What noise is this? Who have we there? Is't you? [*Going.*]
Y. MOR. Nay, stay, my lord, I come to bring you news;
Mine uncle's taken prisoner by the Scots.
K. EDW. Then ransom him.
LAN. 'Twas in your wars; you should ransom him.
Y. MOR. And you shall ransom him, or else ——
KENT. What! Mortimer, you will not threaten him?
K. EDW. Quiet yourself, you shall have the broad seal,
To gather for him thoroughout the realm.
LAN. Your minion Gaveston hath taught you this.
Y. MOR. My lord, the family of the Mortimers
Are not so poor, but, would they sell their land,
'Twould levy men enough to anger you.
We never beg, but use such prayers as these.
K. EDW. Shall I still be haunted thus?
Y. MOR. Nay, now you're here alone, I'll speak my mind.
LAN. And so will I, and then, my lord, farewell.
Y. MOR. The idle triumphs, masques, lascivious shows,
And prodigal gifts bestow'd on Gaveston,
Have drawn thy treasury dry, and made thee weak;
The murmuring commons, overstretched, [break].
LAN. Look for rebellion, look to be depos'd.
Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,
And, lame and poor, lie groaning at the gates.
The wild O'Neill, with swarms of Irish kerns,
Lives uncontroll'd within the English pale.
Unto the walls of York the Scots made road,
And unresisted drave away rich spoils.
Y. MOR. The haughty Dane commands the narrow seas,
While in the harbour ride thy ships unrigg'd.
LAN. What foreign prince sends thee ambassadors?
Y. MOR. Who loves thee, but a sort of flatterers?
LAN. Thy gentle queen, sole sister to Valois,
Complains that thou hast left her all forlorn.

Y. Mor. Thy court is naked, being bereft of those
That make a king seem glorious to the world;
I mean the peers, whom thou should'st dearly love.
Libels are cast again thee in the street;
Ballads and rhymes made of thy overthrow.
Lan. The Northern borderers seeing their houses burnt,
Their wives and children slain, run up and down,
Cursing the name of thee and Gaveston.
Y. Mor. When wert thou in the field with banner spread,
But once? and then thy soldiers marcht like players,
With garish robes, not armour; and thyself,
Bedaub'd with gold, rode laughing at the rest,
Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest,
Where women's favours hung like labels down.
Lan. And therefore came it, that the fleering Scots,
To England's high disgrace, have made this jig:

"Maids of England, sore may you mourn,—
For your lemans you have lost at Bannocksbourn,—
With a heave and a ho!
What weeneth the King of England,
So soon to have won Scotland?—
With a rombelow!"

Y. Mor. Wigmore shall fly, to set my uncle free.
Lan. And when 'tis gone, our swords shall purchase more.
If ye be mov'd, revenge it as you can;
Look next to see us with our ensigns spread.
(*Exit* [*with* Young Mortimer].)
K. Edw. My swelling heart for very anger breaks!
How oft have I been baited by these peers,
And dare not be reveng'd, for their power is great!
Yet, shall the crowing of these cockerels
Affright a lion? Edward, unfold thy paws,
And let their lives' blood slake thy fury's hunger.
If I be cruel and grow tyrannous,
Now let them thank themselves, and rue too late.
Kent. My lord, I see your love to Gaveston
Will be the ruin of the realm and you,
For now the wrathful nobles threaten wars,
And therefore, brother, banish him for ever.
K. Edw. Art thou an enemy to my Gaveston?
Kent. Ay, and it grieves me that I favoured him.
K. Edw. Traitor, begone! whine thou with Mortimer.
Kent. So will I, rather than with Gaveston.
K. Edw. Out of my sight, and trouble me no more!
Kent. No marvel though thou scorn thy noble peers,
When I thy brother am rejected thus.
K. Edw. Away! (*Exit* Kent.)
Poor Gaveston, that has no friend but me,
Do what they can, we'll live in Tynemouth here,
And, so I walk with him about the walls,
What care I though the earls begirt us round?—
Here comes she that is cause of all these jars.

(*Enter* Queen Isabella *with* [King Edward's *Niece, two*] *Ladies*, [Gaveston], Baldock, *and* Young Spencer.)

Q. Isab. My lord, 'tis thought the earls are up in arms.
K. Edw. Ay, and 'tis likewise thought you favour 'em.
Q. Isab. Thus do you still suspect me without cause?
Niece. Sweet uncle! speak more kindly to the queen.
Gav. My lord, dissemble with her, speak her fair.
K. Edw. Pardon me, sweet, I forgot myself.
Q. Isab. Your pardon is quickly got of Isabel.
K. Edw. The younger Mortimer is grown so brave,

That to my face he threatens civil wars.
Gav. Why do you not commit him to the Tower?
K. Edw. I dare not, for the people love him well.
Gav. Why, then we'll have him privily made away.
K. Edw. Would Lancaster and he had both carous'd
A bowl of poison to each other's health!
But let them go, and tell me what are these?
Niece. Two of my father's servants whilst he liv'd, —
Mayst please your grace to entertain them now.
K. Edw. Tell me, where wast thou born? What is thine arms?
Bald. My name is Baldock, and my gentry
I fetcht from Oxford, not from heraldry.
K. Edw. The fitter art thou, Baldock, for my turn.
Wait on me, and I'll see thou shalt not want.
Bald. I humbly thank your majesty.
K. Edw. Knowest thou him, Gaveston?
Gav. Ay, my lord;
His name is Spencer, he is well allied;
For my sake, let him wait upon your grace;
Scarce shall you find a man of more desert.
K. Edw. Then, Spencer, wait upon me; for his sake
I'll grace thee with a higher style ere long.
Y. Spen. No greater titles happen unto me,
Than to be favoured of your majesty.
K. Edw. Cousin, this day shall be your marriage-feast.
And, Gaveston, think that I love thee well
To wed thee to our niece, the only heir
Unto the Earl of Gloucester late deceas'd.
Gav. I know, my lord, many will stomach me,
But I respect neither their love nor hate.
K. Edw. The headstrong barons shall not limit me;
He that I list to favour shall be great.
Come, let's away; and when the marriage ends,
Have at the rebels, and their 'complices!
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene III.]

(*Enter* Kent, Lancaster, Young Mortimer, Warwick, Pembroke, [*and others*].)

Kent. My lords, of love to this our native land
I come to join with you and leave the king;
And in your quarrel and the realm's behoof
Will be the first that shall adventure life.
Lan. I fear me, you are sent of policy,
To undermine us with a show of love.
War. He is your brother, therefore have we cause
To cast the worst, and doubt of your revolt.
Kent. Mine honour shall be hostage of my truth;
If that will not suffice, farewell, my lords.
Y. Mor. Stay, Edmund; never was Plantagenet
False to his word, and therefore trust we thee.
Pem. But what's the reason you should leave him now?
Kent. I have inform'd the Earl of Lancaster.
Lan. And it sufficeth. Now, my lords, know this,
That Gaveston is secretly arriv'd,
And here in Tynemouth frolics with the king.
Let us with these our followers scale the walls,
And suddenly surprise them unawares.
Y. Mor. I'll give the onset.
War. And I'll follow thee.
Y. Mor. This tottered ensign of my ancestors,
Which swept the desert shore of that dead sea
Whereof we got the name of Mortimer,
Will I advance upon these castle-walls.
Drums, strike alarum, raise them from their sport,
And ring aloud the knell of Gaveston!
Lan. None be so hardy as to touch the king;
But neither spare you Gaveston nor his friends.
(*Exeunt.*)

[SCENE IV.]

(*Enter* KING EDWARD *and* YOUNG SPENCER.)

K. EDW. O tell me, Spencer, where is Gaveston?
SPEN. I fear he is slain, my gracious lord.
K. EDW. No, here he comes; now let them spoil and kill.

[*Enter* QUEEN ISABELLA, KING EDWARD'S *Niece*, GAVESTON, *and Nobles*.]

Fly, fly, my lords, the earls have got the hold;
Take shipping and away to Scarborough;
Spencer and I will post away by land.
GAV. O stay, my lord, they will not injure you.
K. EDW. I will not trust them; Gaveston, away!
GAV. Farewell, my lord.
K. EDW. Lady, farewell.
NIECE. Farewell, sweet uncle, till we meet again.
K. EDW. Farewell, sweet Gaveston; and farewell, niece.
Q. ISAB. No farewell to poor Isabel thy queen?
K. EDW. Yes, yes, for Mortimer, your lover's sake.
(*Exeunt all but* QUEEN ISABELLA.)
Q. ISAB. Heavens can witness I love none but you!
From my embracements thus he breaks away.
O that mine arms could close this isle about,
That I might pull him to me where I would!
Or that these tears that drizzle from mine eyes
Had power to mollify his stony heart,
That when I had him we might never part.

(*Enter the Barons*, [LANCASTER, WARWICK, YOUNG MORTIMER, *and others*]. *Alarums.*)

LAN. I wonder how he scap'd!
Y. MOR. Who's this? The queen!
Q. ISAB. Ay, Mortimer, the miserable queen,
Whose pining heart her inward sighs have blasted,
And body with continual mourning wasted.
These hands are tir'd with haling of my lord
From Gaveston, from wicked Gaveston,
And all in vain; for, when I speak him fair,
He turns away, and smiles upon his minion.
Y. MOR. Cease to lament, and tell us where's the king?
Q. ISAB. What would you with the king? Is't him you seek?
LAN. No, madam, but that cursed Gaveston.
Far be it from the thought of Lancaster
To offer violence to his sovereign.
We would but rid the realm of Gaveston:
Tell us where he remains, and he shall die.
Q. ISAB. He's gone by water unto Scarborough;
Pursue him quickly, and he cannot scape;
The king hath left him, and his train is small.
WAR. Foreslow no time, sweet Lancaster; let's march.
Y. MOR. How comes it that the king and he is parted?
Q. ISAB. That thus your army, going several ways,
Might be of lesser force; and with the power
That he intendeth presently to raise,
Be easily suppress'd; therefore be gone.
Y. MOR. Here in the river rides a Flemish hoy;
Let's all aboard, and follow him amain.
LAN. The wind that bears him hence will fill our sails.
Come, come aboard, 'tis but an hour's sailing.
Y. MOR. Madam, stay you within this castle here.
Q. ISAB. No, Mortimer, I'll to my lord the king.
Y. MOR. Nay, rather sail with us to Scarborough.
Q. ISAB. You know the king is so suspicious,
As if he hear I have but talk'd with you,
Mine honour will be call'd in question;
And therefore, gentle Mortimer, be gone.
Y. MOR. Madam, I cannot stay to answer you,

But think of Mortimer as he deserves.
[*Exeunt all except* Queen Isabella.]

Q. Isab. So well hast thou deserv'd, sweet Mortimer,
As Isabel could live with thee for ever!
In vain I look for love at Edward's hand,
Whose eyes are fix'd on none but Gaveston;
Yet once more I'll importune him with prayers.
If he be strange and not regard my words,
My son and I will over into France,
And to the king my brother there complain,
How Gaveston hath robb'd me of his love:
But yet I hope my sorrows will have end,
And Gaveston this blessed day be slain.
(*Exit.*)

[Scene V.]

(*Enter* Gaveston, *pursued.*)

Gav. Yet, lusty lords, I have escap'd your hands,
Your threats, your 'larums, and your hot pursuits;
And though divorced from King Edward's eyes,
Yet liveth Pierce of Gaveston unsurpris'd,
Breathing, in hope (*malgrado* all your beards,
That muster rebels thus against your king),
To see his royal sovereign once again.

(*Enter the Nobles*, [Warwick, Lancaster, Pembroke, Young Mortimer, *Soldiers*, James, *and other Attendants of* Pembroke].)

War. Upon him, soldiers, take away his weapons.
Y. Mor. Thou proud disturber of thy country's peace,
Corrupter of thy king, cause of these broils,
Base flatterer, yield! and were it not for shame,
Shame and dishonour to a soldier's name,
Upon my weapon's point here shouldst thou fall,
And welter in thy gore.
Lan. Monster of men!
That, like the Greekish strumpet, train'd to arms
And bloody wars so many valiant knights;
Look for no other fortune, wretch, than death!
King Edward is not here to buckler thee.
War. Lancaster, why talk'st thou to the slave?
Go, soldiers, take him hence, for, by my sword,
His head shall off. Gaveston, short warning
Shall serve thy turn; it is our country's cause
That here severely we will execute
Upon thy person. Hang him at a bough.
Gav. My lord! —
War. Soldiers, have him away; —
But for thou wert the favourite of a king,
Thou shalt have so much honour at our hands —
Gav. I thank you all, my lords: then I perceive,
That heading is one, and hanging is the other,
And death is all.

(*Enter* Earl of Arundel.)

Lan. How now, my lord of Arundel?
Arun. My lords, King Edward greets you all by me.
War. Arundel, say your message.
Arun. His majesty,
Hearing that you had taken Gaveston,
Entreateth you by me, yet but he may
See him before he dies; for why, he says,
And sends you word, he knows that die he shall;
And if you gratify his grace so far,
He will be mindful of the courtesy.
War. How now?
Gav. Renowmed Edward, how thy name
Revives poor Gaveston!
War. No, it needeth not;
Arundel, we will gratify the king
In other matters; he must pardon us in this.
Soldiers, away with him!
Gav. Why, my lord of Warwick,
Will not these delays beget my hopes?
I know it, lords, it is this life you aim at,

Yet grant King Edward this.
Y. Mor. Shalt thou appoint
What we shall grant? Soldiers, away with him!
Thus we'll gratify the king:
We'll send his head by thee; let him bestow
His tears on that, for that is all he gets
Of Gaveston, or else his senseless trunk.
Lan. Not so, my lords, lest he bestow more cost
In burying him than he hath ever earn'd.
Arun. My lords, it is his majesty's request,
And in the honour of a king he swears,
He will but talk with him, and send him back.
War. When? can you tell? Arundel, no; we wot
He that the care of his realm remits,
And drives his nobles to these exigents
For Gaveston, will, if he sees him once,
Violate any promises to possess him.
Arun. Then if you will not trust his grace in keep,
My lords, I will be pledge for his return.
Y. Mor. 'Tis honourable in thee to offer this;
But for we know thou art a noble gentleman,
We will not wrong thee so, to make away
A true man for a thief.
Gav. How mean'st thou, Mortimer? That is over-base.
Y. Mor. Away, base groom, robber of king's renown!
Question with thy companions and thy mates.
Pem. My Lord Mortimer, and you, my lords, each one,
To gratify the king's request therein,
Touching the sending of this Gaveston,
Because his majesty so earnestly
Desires to see the man before his death,
I will upon mine honour undertake
To carry him, and bring him back again;
Provided this, that you my lord of Arundel
Will join with me.
War. Pembroke, what wilt thou do?
Cause yet more bloodshed? Is it not enough
That we have taken him, but must we now
Leave him on "had I wist," and let him go?
Pem. My lords, I will not over-woo your honours,
But if you dare trust Pembroke with the prisoner,
Upon mine oath, I will return him back.
Arun. My lord of Lancaster, what say you in this?
Lan. Why, I say, let him go on Pembroke's word.
Pem. And you, Lord Mortimer?
Y. Mor. How say you, my lord of Warwick?
War. Nay, do your pleasures, I know how 'twill prove.
Pem. Then give him me.
Gav. Sweet sovereign, yet I come
To see thee ere I die.
War. [*aside*]. Yet not perhaps,
If Warwick's wit and policy prevail.
Y. Mor. My lord of Pembroke, we deliver him you;
Return him on your honour. Sound, away!
(*Exeunt all except* Pembroke, Arundel, Gaveston, [James, *and other*] *Attendants of* Pembroke.)
Pem. My lord [Arundel,] you shall go with me.
My house is not far hence; out of the way
A little, but our men shall go along.
We that have pretty wenches to our wives,
Sir, must not come so near and baulk their lips.
Arun. 'Tis very kindly spoke, my lord of Pembroke;
Your honour hath an adamant of power
To draw a prince.
Pem. So, my lord. Come hither, James:
I do commit this Gaveston to thee,
Be thou this night his keeper; in the morning
We will discharge thee of thy charge. Be gone.
Gav. Unhappy Gaveston, whither goest thou now?
(*Exit with* [James *and the other*] *Attendants.*)
Horse-boy. My lord, we'll quickly be at Cobham. (*Exeunt.*)

[ACT III]

[Scene I.]

(*Enter* Gaveston *mourning*, [James *and other*] *Attendants of* Pembroke.)

Gav. O treacherous Warwick! thus to wrong thy friend.
James. I see it is your life these arms pursue.
Gav. Weaponless must I fall, and die in bands?
O! must this day be period of my life?
Centre of all my bliss! An ye be men,
Speed to the king.

(*Enter* Warwick *and his company.*)

War. My lord of Pembroke's men,
Strive you no longer — I will have that Gaveston.
James. Your lordship does dishonour to yourself,
And wrong our lord, your honourable friend.
War. No, James, it is my country's cause I follow.
Go, take the villain; soldiers, come away.
We'll make quick work. Commend me to your master,
My friend, and tell him that I watch'd it well.
Come, let thy shadow parley with King Edward.
Gav. Treacherous earl, shall I not see the king?
War. The king of Heaven, perhaps; no other king.
Away!

(*Exeunt* Warwick *and his men with* Gaveston.)

James. Come, fellows, it booted not for us to strive,
We will in haste go certify our lord.
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* King Edward *and* [Young] Spencer, [Baldock, *and Nobles of the* King's *side, and Soldiers*] *with drums and fifes.*)

K. Edw. I long to hear an answer from the barons
Touching my friend, my dearest Gaveston.
Ah! Spencer, not the riches of my realm
Can ransom him! Ah, he is mark'd to die!
I know the malice of the younger Mortimer,
Warwick I know is rough, and Lancaster
Inexorable, and I shall never see
My lovely Pierce, my Gaveston again!
The barons overbear me with their pride.
Y. Spen. Were I King Edward, England's sovereign,
Son to the lovely Eleanor of Spain,
Great Edward Longshanks' issue, would I bear
These braves, this rage, and suffer uncontroll'd
These barons thus to beard me in my land,
In mine own realm? My lord, pardon my speech:
Did you retain your father's magnanimity,
Did you regard the honour of your name,
You would not suffer thus your majesty
Be counterbuff'd of your nobility.
Strike off their heads, and let them preach on poles!
No doubt, such lessons they will teach the rest,
As by their preachments they will profit much,
And learn obedience to their lawful king.
K. Edw. Yea, gentle Spencer, we have been too mild,
Too kind to them; but now have drawn our sword,
And if they send me not my Gaveston,
We'll steel it on their crest, and poll their tops.
Bald. This haught resolve becomes your majesty,
Not to be tied to their affection,
As though your highness were a schoolboy still,
And must be aw'd and govern'd like a child.

(*Enter the* Elder Spencer, *with his truncheon and Soldiers.*)

E. Spen. Long live my sovereign, the noble Edward,
In peace triumphant, fortunate in wars!
K. Edw. Welcome, old man, com'st thou in Edward's aid?

Then tell thy prince of whence, and what thou art.
E. Spen. Lo, with a band of bowmen and of pikes,
Brown bills and targeteers, four hundred strong,
Sworn to defend King Edward's royal right,
I come in person to your majesty,
Spencer, the father of Hugh Spencer there,
Bound to your highness everlastingly,
For favour done, in him, unto us all.
K. Edw. Thy father, Spencer?
Y. Spen. True, an it like your grace,
That pours, in lieu of all your goodness shown,
His life, my lord, before your princely feet.
K. Edw. Welcome ten thousand times, old man, again.
Spencer, this love, this kindness to thy king,
Argues thy noble mind and disposition.
Spencer, I here create thee Earl of Wiltshire,
And daily will enrich thee with our favour,
That, as the sunshine, shall reflect o'er thee.
Beside, the more to manifest our love,
Because we hear Lord Bruce doth sell his land,
And that the Mortimers are in hand withal,
Thou shalt have crowns of us t' outbid the barons:
And, Spencer, spare them not, but lay it on.
Soldiers, a largess, and thrice welcome all!
Y. Spen. My lord, here comes the queen.

(*Enter* Queen [Isabella,] *and her son* [Prince Edward,] *and* Levune, *a Frenchman.*)

K. Edw. Madam, what news?
Q. Isab. News of dishonour, lord, and discontent.
Our friend Levune, faithful and full of trust,
Informeth us, by letters and by words,
That Lord Valois our brother, King of France,
Because your highness hath been slack in homage,
Hath seized Normandy into his hands.
These be the letters, this the messenger.
K. Edw. Welcome, Levune. Tush, Sib, if this be all
Valois and I will soon be friends again. —
But to my Gaveston; shall I never see,
Never behold thee now? — Madam, in this matter,
We will employ you and your little son;
You shall go parley with the king of France. —
Boy, see you bear you bravely to the king,
And do your message with a majesty.
P. Edw. Commit not to my youth things of more weight
Than fits a prince so young as I to bear,
And fear not, lord and father, Heaven's great beams
On Atlas' shoulder shall not lie more safe,
Than shall your charge committed to my trust.
Q. Isab. Ah, boy! this towardness makes thy mother fear
Thou art not mark'd to many days on earth.
K. Edw. Madam, we will that you with speed be shipp'd,
And this our son; Levune shall follow you
With all the haste we can despatch him hence.
Choose of our lords to bear you company,
And go in peace; leave us in wars at home.
Q. Isab. Unnatural wars, where subjects brave their king;
God end them once! My lords, I take my leave,
To make my preparation for France.
[*Exit with* Prince Edward.]

(*Enter* [Arundel].)

K. Edw. What, Lord [Arundel,] dost thou come alone?
Arun. Yea, my good lord, for Gaveston is dead.
K. Edw. Ah, traitors! have they put my friend to death?
Tell me, Arundel, died he ere thou cam'st,

Or didst thou see my friend to take his death?
Arun. Neither, my lord; for as he was surpris'd,
Begirt with weapons and with enemies round,
I did your highness' message to them all;
Demanding him of them, entreating rather,
And said, upon the honour of my name,
That I would undertake to carry him
Unto your highness, and to bring him back.
K. Edw. And tell me, would the rebels deny me that?
Y. Spen. Proud recreants!
K. Edw. Yea, Spencer, traitors all.
Arun. I found them at the first inexorable;
The Earl of Warwick would not bide the hearing,
Mortimer hardly; Pembroke and Lancaster
Spake least: and when they flatly had denied,
Refusing to receive me pledge for him,
The Earl of Pembroke mildly thus bespake:
"My lords, because our sovereign sends for him,
And promiseth he shall be safe return'd,
I will this undertake, to have him hence,
And see him re-delivered to your hands."
K. Edw. Well, and how fortunes [it] that he came not?
Y. Spen. Some treason, or some villainy, was cause.
Arun. The Earl of Warwick seiz'd him on his way;
For being delivered unto Pembroke's men,
Their lord rode home thinking his prisoner safe;
But ere he came, Warwick in ambush lay,
And bare him to his death; and in a trench
Strake off his head, and march'd unto the camp.
Y. Spen. A bloody part, flatly 'gainst law of arms!
K. Edw. O shall I speak, or shall I sigh and die!
Y. Spen. My lord, refer your vengeance to the sword
Upon these barons; hearten up your men;
Let them not unreveng'd murder your friends!
Advance your standard, Edward, in the field,
And march to fire them from their starting holes.
K. Edw. (*kneeling*). By earth, the common mother of us all,
By Heaven, and all the moving orbs thereof,
By this right hand, and by my father's sword,
And all the honours 'longing to my crown,
I will have heads and lives for him, as many
As I have manors, castles, towns, and towers! — [*Rises.*]
Treacherous Warwick! traitorous Mortimer!
If I be England's king, in lakes of gore
Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail,
That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood,
And stain my royal standard with the same,
That so my bloody colours may suggest
Remembrance of revenge immortally
On your accursed traitorous progeny,
You villains, that have slain my Gaveston!
And in this place of honour and of trust,
Spencer, sweet Spencer, I adopt thee here:
And merely of our love we do create thee
Earl of Gloucester, and Lord Chamberlain,
Despite of times, despite of enemies.
Y. Spen. My lord, here's a messenger from the barons.
Desires access unto your majesty.
K. Edw. Admit him near.

(*Enter the Herald from the Barons with his coat of arms.*)

Her. Long live King Edward, England's lawful lord!
K. Edw. So wish not they, I wis, that sent thee hither.
Thou com'st from Mortimer and his 'complices,
A ranker rout of rebels never was.
Well, say thy message.

Her. The barons up in arms, by me salute
Your highness with long life and happiness;
And bid me say, as plainer to your grace,
That if without effusion of blood
You will this grief have ease and remedy,
That from your princely person you remove
This Spencer, as a putrifying branch,
That deads the royal vine, whose golden leaves
Empale your princely head, your diadem,
Whose brightness such pernicious upstarts dim,
Say they; and lovingly advise your grace,
To cherish virtue and nobility,
And have old servitors in high esteem,
And shake off smooth dissembling flatterers.
This granted, they, their honours, and their lives,
Are to your highness vow'd and consecrate.

Y. Spen. Ah, traitors! will they still display their pride?

K. Edw. Away, tarry no answer, but be gone!
Rebels, will they appoint their sovereign
His sports, his pleasures, and his company?
Yet, ere thou go, see how I do divorce
(*Embraces* Spencer.)
Spencer from me. — Now get thee to thy lords,
And tell them I will come to chastise them
For murdering Gaveston; hie thee, get thee gone!
Edward with fire and sword follows at thy heels. [*Exit Herald.*]
My lords, perceive you how these rebels swell?
Soldiers, good hearts, defend your sovereign's right,
For now, even now, we march to make them stoop.
Away!

(*Exeunt. Alarums, excursions, a great fight, and a retreat* [*sounded, within*].)

[Scene III.]

(*Re-enter* King Edward, *the* Elder Spencer, Young Spencer, *and Noblemen of the* King's *side.*)

K. Edw. Why do we sound retreat? Upon them, lords!
This day I shall pour vengeance with my sword
On those proud rebels that are up in arms
And do confront and countermand their king.

Y. Spen. I doubt it not, my lord, right will prevail.

E. Spen. 'Tis not amiss, my liege, for either part
To breathe awhile; our men, with sweat and dust
All chokt well near, begin to faint for heat;
And this retire refresheth horse and man.

Y. Spen. Here come the rebels.

(*Enter the Barons,* Young Mortimer, Lancaster, Warwick, Pembroke, *and others.*)

Y. Mor. Look, Lancaster, yonder is Edward
Among his flatterers.

Lan. And there let him be
Till he pay dearly for their company.

War. And shall, or Warwick's sword shall smite in vain.

K. Edw. What, rebels, do you shrink and sound retreat?

Y. Mor. No, Edward, no; thy flatterers faint and fly.

Lan. Thou'd best betimes forsake them, and their trains,
For they'll betray thee, traitors as they are.

Y. Spen. Traitor on thy face, rebellious Lancaster!

Pem. Away, base upstart, brav'st thou nobles thus?

E. Spen. A noble attempt and honorable deed,
Is it not, trow ye, to assemble aid,
And levy arms against your lawful king!

K. Edw. For which ere long their heads shall satisfy,
T' appease the wrath of their offended king.

Y. Mor. Then, Edward, thou wilt fight it to the last,
And rather bathe thy sword in subjects' blood,
Than banish that pernicious company?

K. Edw. Ay, traitors all, rather than thus be brav'd,
Make England's civil towns huge heaps of stones,
And ploughs to go about our palace-gates.

War. A desperate and unnatural resolution!
Alarum! to the fight!
St. George for England, and the barons' right!

K. Edw. Saint George for England, and King Edward's right!
[*Alarums. Exeunt the two parties severally.*]

[Scene IV.]

(*Enter* King Edward [*and his followers,*] *with the Barons* [*and* Kent], *captives.*)

K. Edw. Now, lusty lords, now, not by chance of war,
But justice of the quarrel and the cause,
Vail'd is your pride; methinks you hang the heads,
But we'll advance them, traitors. Now 'tis time
To be aveng'd on you for all your braves,
And for the murder of my dearest friend,
To whom right well you knew our soul was knit,
Good Pierce of Gaveston, my sweet favourite.
Ah, rebels! recreants! you made him away.

Kent. Brother, in regard of thee, and of thy land,
Did they remove that flatterer from thy throne.

K. Edw. So, sir, you have spoke; away, avoid our presence! [*Exit* Kent.]
Accursed wretches, was't in regard of us,
When we had sent our messenger to request
He might be spar'd to come to speak with us,
And Pembroke undertook for his return,
That thou, proud Warwick, watch'd the prisoner,
Poor Pierce, and headed him 'gainst law of arms?
For which thy head shall overlook the rest,
As much as thou in rage outwent'st the rest.

War. Tyrant, I scorn thy threats and menaces;
It is but temporal that thou canst inflict.

Lan. The worst is death, and better die to live
Than live in infamy under such a king.

K. Edw. Away with them, my lord of Winchester!
These lusty leaders, Warwick and Lancaster,
I charge you roundly — off with both their heads!
Away!

War. Farewell, vain world!

Lan. Sweet Mortimer, farewell.

Y. Mor. England, unkind to thy nobility,
Groan for this grief, behold how thou art maim'd!

K. Edw. Go take that haughty Mortimer to the Tower,
There see him safe bestow'd; and for the rest,
Do speedy execution on them all.
Begone!

Y. Mor. What, Mortimer! can ragged stony walls
Immure thy virtue that aspires to Heaven?
No, Edward, England's scourge, it may not be;
Mortimer's hope surmounts his fortune far. [*The captive Barons are led off.*]

K. Edw. Sound drums and trumpets! March with me, my friends,
Edward this day hath crown'd him king anew.
(*Exeunt all except* Young Spencer, Levune, *and* Baldock.)

Y. Spen. Levune, the trust that we repose in thee,
Begets the quiet of King Edward's land.
Therefore begone in haste, and with advice
Bestow that treasure on the lords of France,
That, therewith all enchanted, like the guard

That suffered Jove to pass in showers of gold
To Danaë, all aid may be denied
To Isabel, the queen, that now in France
Makes friends, to cross the seas with her young son,
And step into his father's regiment.
Levune. That's it these barons and the subtle queen
Long levell'd at.
Bal. Yea, but, Levune, thou seest
These barons lay their heads on blocks together;
What they intend, the hangman frustrates clean.
Levune. Have you no doubt, my lords, I'll clap so close
Among the lords of France with England's gold,
That Isabel shall make her plaints in vain,
And France shall be obdurate with her tears.
Y. Spen. Then make for France amain; Levune, away!
Proclaim King Edward's wars and victories.
(*Exeunt.*)

[ACT IV]

[Scene I.]

(*Enter* Kent.)

Kent. Fair blows the wind for France; blow gentle gale,
Till Edmund be arriv'd for England's good!
Nature, yield to my country's cause in this.
A brother? No, a butcher of thy friends!
Proud Edward, dost thou banish me thy presence?
But I'll to France, and cheer the wronged queen,
And certify what Edward's looseness is.
Unnatural king! to slaughter noblemen
And cherish flatterers! Mortimer, I stay
Thy sweet escape: stand gracious, gloomy night,
To his device.

(*Enter* Young Mortimer, *disguised.*)

Y. Mor. Holla! who walketh there?
Is't you, my lord?
Kent. Mortimer, 'tis I;
But hath thy potion wrought so happily?
Y. Mor. It hath, my Lord; the warders all asleep,
I thank them, gave me leave to pass in peace.
But hath your grace got shipping unto France?
Kent. Fear it not. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Queen [Isabella] *and her son* [Prince Edward].)

Q. Isab. Ah, boy! our friends do fail us all in France.
The lords are cruel, and the king unkind;
What shall we do?
P. Edw. Madam, return to England,
And please my father well, and then a fig
For all my uncle's friendship here in France.
I warrant you, I'll win his highness quickly;
'A loves me better than a thousand Spencers.
Q. Isab. Ah, boy, thou art deceiv'd, at least in this,
To think that we can yet be tun'd together;
No, no, we jar too far. Unkind Valois!
Unhappy Isabel! when France rejects,
Whither, oh! whither dost thou bend thy steps?

(*Enter* Sir John *of* Hainault.)

Sir J. Madam, what cheer?
Q. Isab. Ah! good Sir John of Hainault,
Never so cheerless, nor so far distrest.
Sir J. I hear, sweet lady, of the king's unkindness;
But droop not, madam; noble minds contemn
Despair. Will your grace with me to Hainault,
And there stay time's advantage with your son?
How say you, my lord, will you go with your friends,
And share of all our fortunes equally?
P. Edw. So pleaseth the queen, my mother, me it likes.

The King of England, nor the court of France,
Shall have me from my gracious mother's side,
Till I be strong enough to break a staff;
And then have at the proudest Spencer's head.
Sir J. Well said, my lord.
Q. Isab. O, my sweet heart, how do I moan thy wrongs,
Yet triumph in the hope of thee, my joy!
Ah, sweet Sir John! even to the utmost verge
Of Europe, or the shore of Tanais,
Will we with thee to Hainault — so we will: —
The marquis is a noble gentleman;
His grace, I dare presume, will welcome me.
But who are these?

(*Enter* Kent *and* Young Mortimer.)

Kent. Madam, long may you live,
Much happier than your friends in England do!
Q. Isab. Lord Edmund and Lord Mortimer alive!
Welcome to France! The news was here, my lord,
That you were dead, or very near your death.
Y. Mor. Lady, the last was truest of the twain;
But Mortimer, reserv'd for better hap,
Hath shaken off the thraldom of the Tower,
And lives t' advance your standard, good my lord.
P. Edw. How mean you? An the king, my father, lives?
No, my Lord Mortimer, not I, I trow.
Q. Isab. Not, son! why not? I would it were no worse.
But, gentle lords, friendless we are in France.
Y. Mor. Monsieur le Grand, a noble friend of yours,
Told us, at our arrival, all the news:
How hard the nobles, how unkind the king
Hath show'd himself; but, madam, right makes room
Where weapons want; and, though a many friends
Are made away, away, as Warwick, Lancaster,
And others of our party and faction;
Yet have we friends, assure your grace, in England
Would cast up caps, and clap their hands for joy,
To see us there, appointed for our foes.
Kent. Would all were well, and Edward well reclaim'd,
For England's honour, peace, and quietness.
Y. Mor. But by the sword, my lord, 't must be deserv'd;
The king will ne'er forsake his flatterers.
Sir J. My lord of England, sith th' ungentle king
Of France refuseth to give aid of arms
To this distressed queen his sister here,
Go you with her to Hainault. Doubt ye not,
We will find comfort, money, men, and friends
Ere long, to bid the English king a base.
How say, young prince? What think you of the match?
P. Edw. I think King Edward will outrun us all.
Q. Isab. Nay, son, not so; and you must not discourage
Your friends, that are so forward in your aid.
Kent. Sir John of Hainault, pardon us, I pray;
These comforts that you give our woful queen
Bind us in kindness all at your command.
Q. Isab. Yea, gentle brother; and the God of heaven
Prosper your happy motion, good Sir John.
Y. Mor. This noble gentleman, forward in arms,
Was born, I see, to be our anchor-hold.
Sir John of Hainault, be it thy renown,
That England's queen and nobles in distress,
Have been by thee restor'd and comforted.
Sir J. Madam, along, and you my lords, with me,

That England's peers may Hainault's welcome see. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE III.]

(*Enter* KING [EDWARD,] ARUNDEL, *the* ELDER *and* YOUNGER SPENCER, *with others.*)

K. EDW. Thus after many threats of wrathful war,
Triumpheth England's Edward with his friends;
And triumph, Edward, with his friends uncontroll'd!
My lord of Gloucester, do you hear the news?

Y. SPEN. What news, my lord?

K. EDW. Why, man, they say there is great execution
Done through the realm; my lord of Arundel,
You have the note, have you not?

ARUN. From the Lieutenant of the Tower, my lord.

K. EDW. I pray let us see it. [*Takes the note.*] What have we there?
Read it, Spencer.

([*Hands the note to*] YOUNG SPENCER [*who*] *reads the names.*)

Why, so; they bark'd apace a month ago:
Now, on my life, they'll neither bark nor bite.
Now, sirs, the news from France? Gloucester, I trow
The lords of France love England's gold so well
As Isabella gets no aid from thence.
What now remains? Have you proclaim'd, my lord,
Reward for them can bring in Mortimer?

Y. SPEN. My lord, we have; and if he be in England,
'A will be had ere long, I doubt it not.

K. EDW. If, dost thou say? Spencer, as true as death,
He is in England's ground; our portmasters
Are not so careless of their king's command.

(*Enter a Post.*)

How now, what news with thee? From whence come these?

POST. Letters, my lord, and tidings forth of France; —
To you, my lord of Gloucester, from Levune.

[*Gives letters to* YOUNG SPENCER.]

K. EDW. Read.

Y. SPEN. (*reads*).

"My duty to your honour premised, &c., I have, according to instructions in that behalf, dealt with the King of France his lords, and effected that the queen, all discontented and discomforted, is gone: whither, if you ask, with Sir John of Hainault, brother to the marquis, into Flanders. With them are gone Lord Edmund, and the Lord Mortimer, having in their company divers of your nation, and others; and, as constant report goeth, they intend to give King Edward battle in England, sooner than he can look for them. This is all the news of import.

Your honour's in all service, LEVUNE."

K. EDW. Ah, villains! hath that Mortimer escap'd?
With him is Edmund gone associate?
And will Sir John of Hainault lead the round?
Welcome, a' God's name, madam, and your son;
England shall welcome you and all your rout.
Gallop apace, bright Phoebus, through the sky,
And dusky night, in rusty iron car,
Between you both shorten the time, I pray,
That I may see that most desired day
When we may meet these traitors in the field.
Ah, nothing grieves me but my little boy
Is thus misled to countenance their ills.
Come, friends, to Bristow, there to make us strong;
And, winds, as equal be to bring them in,
As you injurious were to bear them forth! [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE IV.]

(*Enter* QUEEN [ISABELLA], *her son,* [PRINCE EDWARD,] KENT, YOUNG MORTIMER, *and* SIR JOHN [*of* HAINAULT].)

Q. ISAB. Now, lords, our loving friends and countrymen,

Welcome to England all, with prosperous winds!
Our kindest friends in Belgia have we left,
To cope with friends at home; a heavy case
When force to force is knit, and sword and glaive
In civil broils make kin and countrymen
Slaughter themselves in others, and their sides
With their own weapons gor'd! But what's the help?
Misgoverned kings are cause of all this wrack;
And, Edward, thou art one among them all,
Whose looseness hath betray'd thy land to spoil,
Who made the channels overflow with blood.
Of thine own people patron shouldst thou be,
But thou ——

Y. MOR. Nay, madam, if you be a warrior,
You must not grow so passionate in speeches.
Lords,
Sith that we are by sufferance of Heaven
Arriv'd and armed in this prince's right,
Here for our country's cause swear we to him
All homage, fealty, and forwardness;
And for the open wrongs and injuries
Edward hath done to us, his queen and land,
We come in arms to wreak it with the sword;
That England's queen in peace may repossess
Her dignities and honours; and withal
We may remove these flatterers from the king,
That havocs England's wealth and treasury.

SIR J. Sound trumpets, my lord, and forward let us march.
Edward will think we come to flatter him.

KENT. I would he never had been flattered more. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE V.]

(*Enter* KING EDWARD, BALDOCK, *and* YOUNG SPENCER, *flying about the stage.*)

Y. SPEN. Fly, fly, my lord! the queen is over-strong;
Her friends do multiply, and yours do fail.
Shape we our course to Ireland, there to breathe.

K. EDW. What! was I born to fly and run away,
And leave the Mortimers conquerors behind?
Give me my horse, and let's reinforce our troops:
And in this bed of honour die with fame.

BALD. O no, my lord, this princely resolution
Fits not the time; away! we are pursu'd. [*Exeunt.*]

(*Enter* KENT, *with sword and target.*)

KENT. This way he fled, but I am come too late.
Edward, alas! my heart relents for thee.
Proud traitor, Mortimer, why dost thou chase
Thy lawful king, thy sovereign, with thy sword?
Vile wretch! and why hast thou, of all unkind,
Borne arms against thy brother and thy king?
Rain showers of vengeance on my cursed head,
Thou God, to whom in justice it belongs
To punish this unnatural revolt!
Edward, this Mortimer aims at thy life!
O fly him, then! But, Edmund, calm this rage,
Dissemble, or thou diest; for Mortimer
And Isabel do kiss, while they conspire;
And yet she bears a face of love forsooth.
Fie on that love that hatcheth death and hate!
Edmund, away! Bristow to Longshanks' blood
Is false. Be not found single for suspect:
Proud Mortimer pries near unto thy walks.

(*Enter* Queen [Isabella], Prince [Edward], Young Mortimer, *and* Sir John *of* Hainault.)

Q. Isab. Successful battle gives the God of kings
To them that fight in right and fear his wrath.
Since then successfully we have prevailed,
Thanked be Heaven's great architect, and you.
Ere farther we proceed, my noble lords,
We here create our well-beloved son,
Of love and care unto his royal person,
Lord Warden of the realm, and sith the fates
Have made his father so unfortunate,
Deal you, my lords, in this, my loving lords,
As to your wisdoms fittest seems in all.
Kent. Madam, without offence, if I may ask,
How will you deal with Edward in his fall?
P. Edw. Tell me, good uncle, what Edward do you mean?
Kent. Nephew, your father; I dare not call him king.
Y. Mor. My lord of Kent, what needs these questions?
'T is not in her controlment, nor in ours,
But as the realm and parliament shall please,
So shall your brother be disposed of. — [*Aside to the* Queen.]
I like not this relenting mood in Edmund.
Madam, 'tis good to look to him betimes.
Q. Isab. My lord, the Mayor of Bristow knows our mind.
Y. Mor. Yea, madam, and they scape not easily
That fled the field.
Q. Isab. Baldock is with the king,
A goodly chancellor, is he not, my lord?
Sir J. So are the Spencers, the father and the son.
Kent. This Edward is the ruin of the realm.

(*Enter* Rice ap Howell *and the Mayor of Bristol, with the* Elder Spencer [*prisoner, and Attendants*].)

Rice. God save Queen Isabel, and her princely son!
Madam, the mayor and citizens of Bristow,
In sign of love and duty to this presence,
Present by me this traitor to the state,
Spencer, the father to that wanton Spencer,
That, like the lawless Catiline of Rome,
Revelled in England's wealth and treasury.
Q. Isab. We thank you all.
Y. Mor. Your loving care in this
Deserveth princely favours and rewards.
But where's the king and the other Spencer fled?
Rice. Spencer the son, created Earl of Gloucester,
Is with that smooth-tongu'd scholar Baldock gone
And shipt but late for Ireland with the king.
Y. Mor. [*aside*]. Some whirlwind fetch them back or sink them all! —
They shall be started thence, I doubt it not.
P. Edw. Shall I not see the king my father yet?
Kent. [*aside*]. Unhappy's Edward, chas'd from England's bounds.
Sir J. Madam, what resteth, why stand you in a muse?
Q. Isab. I rue my lord's ill-fortune; but alas!
Care of my country call'd me to this war.
Y. Mor. Madam, have done with care and sad complaint;
Your king hath wrong'd your country and himself,
And we must seek to right it as we may.
Meanwhile, have hence this rebel to the block.
Your lordship cannot privilege your head.
E. Spen. Rebel is he that fights against his prince;
So fought not they that fought in Edward's right.
Y. Mor. Take him away, he prates.
[*Exeunt Attendants with the* Elder Spencer.]
You, Rice ap Howell,

Shall do good service to her majesty,
Being of countenance in your country here,
To follow these rebellious runagates.
We in meanwhile, madam, must take advice
How Baldock, Spencer, and their complices
May in their fall be followed to their end.
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene VI.]

(*Enter the* Abbot, *Monks,* [King] Edward, Young Spencer, *and* Baldock [*the three latter disguised*].)

Abbot. Have you no doubt, my lord; have you no fear;
As silent and as careful we will be,
To keep your royal person safe with us,
Free from suspect and fell invasion
Of such as have your majesty in chase,
Yourself, and those your chosen company,
As danger of this stormy time requires.

K. Edw. Father, thy face should harbour no deceit.
O! hadst thou ever been a king, thy heart,
Pierced deeply with sense of my distress,
Could not but take compassion of my state.
Stately and proud, in riches and in train,
Whilom I was, powerful, and full of pomp:
But what is he whom rule and empery
Have not in life or death made miserable?
Come, Spencer; come, Baldock, come, sit down by me;
Make trial now of that philosophy,
That in our famous nurseries of arts
Thou suck'dst from Plato and from Aristotle.
Father, this life contemplative is Heaven.
O that I might this life in quiet lead!
But we, alas! are chas'd; and you, my friends,
Your lives and my dishonour they pursue.
Yet, gentle monks, for treasure, gold, nor fee,
Do you betray us and our company.

Monks. Your grace may sit secure, if none but we
Do wot of your abode.

Y. Spen. Not one alive; but shrewdly I suspect
A gloomy fellow in a mead below.
'A gave a long look after us, my lord;
And all the land I know is up in arms,
Arms that pursue our lives with deadly hate.

Bald. We were embark'd for Ireland, wretched we!
With awkward winds and [with] sore tempests driven
To fall on shore, and here to pine in fear
Of Mortimer and his confederates.

K. Edw. Mortimer! who talks of Mortimer?
Who wounds me with the name of Mortimer,
That bloody man? Good father, on thy lap
Lay I this head, laden with mickle care.
O might I never open these eyes again!
Never again lift up this drooping head!
O never more lift up this dying heart!

Y. Spen. Look up, my lord. — Baldock, this drowsiness
Betides no good; here even we are betray'd.

(*Enter, with Welsh hooks,* Rice ap Howell, *a Mower, and* Leicester.)

Mow. Upon my life, these be the men ye seek.

Rice. Fellow, enough. — My lord, I pray be short,
A fair commission warrants what we do.

Leices. The queen's commission, urged by Mortimer;
What cannot gallant Mortimer with the queen?
Alas! see where he sits, and hopes unseen
T' escape their hands that seek to reave his life.
Too true it is, *Quem dies vidit veniens superbum,*
Hunc dies vidit fugiens jacentem.
But, Leicester, leave to grow so passionate.
Spencer and Baldock, by no other names,
I do arrest you of high treason here.
Stand not on titles, but obey th' arrest;
'T is in the name of Isabel the queen.
My lord, why droop you thus?

K. Edw. O day, the last of all my bliss on earth!

Centre of all misfortune! O my stars,
Why do you lour unkindly on a king?
Comes Leicester, then, in Isabella's name
To take my life, my company from me?
Here, man, rip up this panting breast of mine,
And take my heart in rescue of my friends!

RICE. Away with them!

Y. SPEN. It may become thee yet
To let us take our farewell of his grace.

ABBOT. My heart with pity earns to see this sight, —
[*Aside.*] A king to bear these words and proud commands.

K. EDW. Spencer, ah, sweet Spencer, thus then must we part?

Y. SPEN. We must, my lord, so will the angry Heavens.

K. EDW. Nay, so will hell and cruel Mortimer;
The gentle Heavens have not to do in this.

BALD. My lord, it is in vain to grieve or storm.
Here humbly of your grace we take our leaves;
Our lots are cast; I fear me, so is thine.

K. EDW. In Heaven we may, in earth ne'er shall we meet:
And, Leicester, say, what shall become of us?

LEICES. Your majesty must go to Killingworth.

K. EDW. Must! it is somewhat hard, when kings *must* go

LEICES. Here is a litter ready for your grace,
That waits your pleasure, and the day grows old.

RICE. As good be gone, as stay and be benighted,

K. EDW. A litter hast thou? Lay me in a hearse.
And to the gates of hell convey me hence;
Let Pluto's bells ring out my fatal knell,
And hags howl for my death at Charon's shore,
For friends hath Edward none but these and these,
And these must die under a tyrant's sword.

RICE. My lord, be going; care not for these,
For we shall see them shorter by the heads.

K. EDW. Well, that shall be, shall be: part we must!
Sweet Spencer, gentle Baldock, part we must!
Hence feigned weeds! unfeigned are my woes; [*Throws off his disguise.*]
Father, farewell! Leicester, thou stay'st for me,
And go I must. Life, farewell, with my friends.

(*Exeunt* EDWARD *and* LEICESTER.)

Y. SPEN. O! is he gone? Is noble Edward gone?
Parted from hence, never to see us more?
Rent, sphere of Heaven! and, fire, forsake thy orb!
Earth, melt to air! gone is my sovereign,
Gone, gone, alas! never to make return.

BALD. Spencer, I see our souls are fleeted hence;
We are depriv'd the sunshine of our life:
Make for a new life, man; throw up thy eyes,
And heart, and hand to Heaven's immortal throne;
Pay nature's debt with cheerful countenance;
Reduce we all our lessons unto this:
To die, sweet Spencer, therefore live we all;
Spencer, all live to die, and rise to fall.

RICE. Come, come, keep these preachments till you come to the place appointed. You, and such as you are, have made wise work in England. Will your lordships away?

MOW. Your lordship, I trust, will remember me?

RICE. Remember thee, fellow! what else? Follow me to the town.

[*Exeunt.*]

[ACT V]

[SCENE I.]

(*Enter* KING [EDWARD,] LEICESTER, *the* BISHOP [*of* WINCHESTER] *for the crown* [*and* TRUSSEL].)

LEICES. Be patient, good my lord, cease to lament,

Imagine Killingworth Castle were your court,
And that you lay for pleasure here a space,
Not of compulsion or necessity.

K. Edw. Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,
Thy speeches long ago had eas'd my sorrows;
For kind and loving hast thou always been.
The griefs of private men are soon allay'd,
But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds;
But, when the imperial lion's flesh is gor'd,
He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
[And] highly scorning that the lowly earth
Should drink his blood, mounts up into the air.
And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind
The ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb,
And that unnatural queen, false Isabel,
That thus hath pent and mew'd me in a prison;
For such outrageous passions cloy my soul,
As with the wings of rancour and disdain
Full often am I soaring up to Heaven,
To plain me to the gods against them both.
But when I call to mind I am a king,
Methinks I should revenge me of my wrongs,
That Mortimer and Isabel have done.
But what are kings, when regiment is gone,
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?
My nobles rule, I bear the name of king;
I wear the crown, but am controll'd by them,
By Mortimer, and my unconstant queen,
Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy;
Whilst I am lodg'd within this cave of care,
Where sorrow at my elbow still attends,
To company my heart with sad laments,
That bleeds within me for this strange exchange.
But tell me, must I now resign my crown,
To make usurping Mortimer a king?

B. of Win. Your grace mistakes; it is for England's good,
And princely Edward's right we crave the crown.

K. Edw. No, 'tis for Mortimer, not Edward's head;
For he's a lamb, encompassed by wolves,
Which in a moment will abridge his life.
But if proud Mortimer do wear this crown,
Heavens turn it to a blaze of quenchless fire!
Or like the snaky wreath of Tisiphon,
Engirt the temples of his hateful head;
So shall not England's vine be perished,
But Edward's name survives, though Edward dies.

Leices. My lord, why waste you thus the time away?
They stay your answer; will you yield your crown?

K. Edw. Ah, Leicester, weigh how hardly I can brook
To lose my crown and kingdom without cause;
To give ambitious Mortimer my right,
That like a mountain overwhelms my bliss,
In which extreme my mind here murdered is.
But what the heavens appoint, I must obey!
Here, take my crown; the life of Edward too; [*Taking off the crown.*]
Two kings in England cannot reign at once.
But stay awhile, let me be king till night,
That I may gaze upon this glittering crown;
So shall my eyes receive their last content,
My head, the latest honour due to it,
And jointly both yield up their wished right.
Continue ever thou celestial sun;
Let never silent night possess this clime:
Stand still you watches of the element;
All times and seasons, rest you at a stay,
That Edward may be still fair England's king!
But day's bright beam doth vanish fast away,
And needs I must resign my wished crown.
Inhuman creatures! nurs'd with tiger's milk!
Why gape you for your sovereign's overthrow!

My diadem I mean, and guiltless life.
See, monsters, see, I'll wear my crown again! [*He puts on the crown.*]
What, fear you not the fury of your king?
But, hapless Edward, thou are fondly led;
They pass not for thy frowns as late they did,
But seek to make a new-elected king;
Which fills my mind with strange despairing thoughts,
Which thoughts are martyred with endless torments,
And in this torment comfort find I none,
But that I feel the crown upon my head;
And therefore let me wear it yet awhile.
Trus. My lord, the parliament must have present news,
And therefore say, will you resign or no?
(*The* King *rageth.*)
K. Edw. I'll not resign, but whilst I live [be king.]
Traitors, be gone and join with Mortimer!
Elect, conspire, install, do what you will: —
Their blood and yours shall seal these treacheries!
B. of Win. This answer we'll return, and so farewell.
[*Going with* Trussel.]
Leices. Call them again, my lord, and speak them fair;
For if they go, the prince shall lose his right.
K. Edw. Call thou them back, I have no power to speak.
Leices. My lord, the king is willing to resign.
B. of Win. If he be not, let him choose.
K. Edw. O would I might, but heavens and earth conspire
To make me miserable! Here receive my crown;
Receive it? No, these innocent hands of mine
Shall not be guilty of so foul a crime.
He of you all that most desires my blood,
And will be call'd the murderer of a king,
Take it. What, are you mov'd? Pity you me?
Then send for unrelenting Mortimer,
And Isabel, whose eyes, being turn'd to steel,
Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear.
Yet stay, for rather than I'll look on them,
Here, here! [*Gives the crown.*]
Now, sweet God of Heaven,
Make me despise this transitory pomp,
And sit for aye enthronized in Heaven!
Come, death, and with thy fingers close my eyes,
Or if I live, let me forget myself.
B. of Win. My lord —
K. Edw. Call me not lord; away — out of my sight!
Ah, pardon me: grief makes me lunatic!
Let not that Mortimer protect my son;
More safety is there in a tiger's jaws,
Than his embracements. Bear this to the queen,
Wet with my tears, and dried again with sighs; [*Gives a handkerchief.*]
If with the sight thereof she be not mov'd,
Return it back and dip it in my blood.
Commend me to my son, and bid him rule
Better than I. Yet how have I transgress'd,
Unless it be with too much clemency?
Trus. And thus most humbly do we take our leave.
K. Edw. Farewell;
[*Exeunt the* Bishop of Winchester *and* Trussel.]
I know the next news that they bring
Will be my death; and welcome shall it be;
To wretched men, death is felicity.

(*Enter* Berkeley, [*who gives a paper to* Leicester].)

Leices. Another post! what news brings he?
K. Edw. Such news as I expect — come, Berkeley, come,
And tell thy message to my naked breast.
Berk. My lord, think not a thought so villainous
Can harbour in a man of noble birth.
To do your highness service and devoir,
And save you from your foes, Berkeley would die.
Leices. My lord, the council of the queen commands

That I resign my charge.
K. Edw. And who must keep me now? Must you, my lord?
Berk. Ay, my most gracious lord; so 't is decreed.
K. Edw. [*taking the paper*]. By Mortimer, whose name is written here!
Well may I rend his name that rends my heart! [*Tears it.*]
This poor revenge has something eas'd my mind.
So may his limbs be torn, as is this paper!
Hear me, immortal Jove, and grant it too!
Berk. Your grace must hence with me to Berkeley straight.
K. Edw. Whither you will; all places are alike,
And every earth is fit for burial.
Leices. Favour him, my lord, as much as lieth in you.
Berk. Even so betide my soul as I use him.
K. Edw. Mine enemy hath pitied my estate,
And that's the cause that I am now remov'd.
Berk. And thinks your grace that Berkeley will be cruel?
K. Edw. I know not; but of this am I assured,
That death ends all, and I can die but once.
Leicester, farewell!
Leices. Not yet, my lord; I'll bear you on your way. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Queen Isabella *and* Young Mortimer.)

Y. Mor. Fair Isabel, now have we our desire;
The proud corrupters of the light-brain'd king
Have done their homage to the lofty gallows,
And he himself lies in captivity.
Be rul'd by me, and we will rule the realm.
In any case take heed of childish fear,
For now we hold an old wolf by the ears,
That, if he slip, will seize upon us both,
And gripe the sorer, being gript himself.
Think therefore, madam, that imports us much
To erect your son with all the speed we may,
And that I be protector over him;
For our behoof will bear the greater sway
Whenas a king's name shall be under writ.
Q. Isab. Sweet Mortimer, the life of Isabel,
Be thou persuaded that I love thee well,
And therefore, so the prince my son be safe,
Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes,
Conclude against his father what thou wilt,
And I myself will willingly subscribe.
Y. Mor. First would I hear news that he were depos'd,
And then let me alone to handle him.

(*Enter Messenger.*)

Letters! from whence?
Mess. From Killingworth, my lord.
Q. Isab. How fares my lord the king?
Mess. In health, madam, but full of pensiveness.
Q. Isab. Alas, poor soul, would I could ease his grief!

[*Enter the* Bishop of Winchester *with the crown.*]

Thanks, gentle Winchester. [*To the Messenger.*] Sirrah, be gone. [*Exit Messenger.*]
B. of Win. The king hath willingly resign'd his crown.
Q. Isab. O happy news! send for the prince, my son.
B. of Win. Further, or this letter was seal'd, Lord Berkeley came,
So that he now is gone from Killingworth;
And we have heard that Edmund laid a plot
To set his brother free; no more but so.
The lord of Berkeley is so pitiful
As Leicester that had charge of him before.
Q. Isab. Then let some other be his guardian.
Y. Mor. Let me alone, here is the privy seal.
[*Exit the* Bishop of Winchester.]
Who's there? — Call hither Gurney and Matrevis. [*To Attendants within.*]

To dash the heavy-headed Edmund’s drift,
Berkeley shall be discharg’d, the king remov’d,
And none but we shall know where he lieth.
Q. Isab. But, Mortimer, as long as he survives,
What safety rests for us, or for my son?
Y. Mor. Speak, shall he presently be despatch’d and die?
Q. Isab. I would he were, so ’twere not by my means.

(*Enter* Matrevis *and* Gurney.)

Y. Mor. Enough. —
Matrevis, write a letter presently
Unto the lord of Berkeley from ourself
That he resign the king to thee and Gurney;
And when ’tis done, we will subscribe our name.
Mat. It shall be done, my lord.
Y. Mor. Gurney.
Gur. My lord.
Y. Mor. As thou intend’st to rise by Mortimer,
Who now makes Fortune’s wheel turn as he please,
Seek all the means thou canst to make him droop,
And neither give him kind word nor good look.
Gur. I warrant you, my lord.
Y. Mor. And this above the rest: because we hear
That Edmund casts to work his liberty,
Remove him still from place to place by night,
Till at the last he come to Killingworth,
And then from thence to Berkeley back again;
And by the way, to make him fret the more,
Speak curstly to him, and in any case
Let no man comfort him; if he chance to weep,
But amplify his grief with bitter words.
Mat. Fear not, my lord, we’ll do as you command.
Y. Mor. So now away; post thitherwards amain.
Q. Isab. Whither goes this letter? To my lord the king?
Commend me humbly to his majesty,
And tell him that I labour all in vain
To ease his grief, and work his liberty;
And bear him this as witness of my love.
[*Gives a ring.*]
Mat. I will, madam. (*Exit with* Gurney.)

(*Enter* Prince [Edward,] *and* Kent *talking with him.*)

Y. Mor. Finely dissembled. Do so still, sweet queen.
Here comes the young prince with the Earl of Kent.
Q. Isab. Something he whispers in his childish ears.
Y. Mor. If he have such access unto the prince,
Our plots and stratagems will soon be dash’d.
Q. Isab. Use Edmund friendly, as if all were well.
Y. Mor. How fares my honourable lord of Kent?
Kent. In health, sweet Mortimer. How fares your grace?
Q. Isab. Well, if my lord your brother were enlarg’d.
Kent. I hear of late he hath depos’d himself.
Q. Isab. The more my grief.
Y. Mor. And mine.
Kent. [*aside*]. Ah, they do dissemble!
Q. Isab. Sweet son, come hither, I must talk with thee.
Y. Mor. You being his uncle, and the next of blood,
Do look to be protector o’er the prince.
Kent. Not I, my lord; who should protect the son,
But she that gave him life? I mean the queen.
P. Edw. Mother, persuade me not to wear the crown:
Let him be king — I am too young to reign.
Q. Isab. But be content, seeing ’tis his highness’ pleasure.
P. Edw. Let me but see him first, and then I will.
Kent. Ay, do, sweet nephew.
Q. Isab. Brother, you know it is impossible.
P. Edw. Why, is he dead?

Q. Isab. No, God forbid!
Kent. I would those words proceeded from your heart.
Y. Mor. Inconstant Edmund, dost thou favour him,
That wast the cause of his imprisonment?
Kent. The more cause have I now to make amends.
Y. Mor. [*aside to* Q. Isab.]. I tell thee, 'tis not meet that one so false
Should come about the person of a prince. —
My lord, he hath betray'd the king his brother,
And therefore trust him not.
P. Edw. But he repents, and sorrows for it now.
Q. Isab. Come, son, and go with this gentle lord and me.
P. Edw. With you I will, but not with Mortimer.
Y. Mor. Why, youngling, 'sdain'st thou so of Mortimer?
Then I will carry thee by force away.
P. Edw. Help, uncle Kent! Mortimer will wrong me.
Q. Isab. Brother Edmund, strive not; we are his friends;
Isabel is nearer than the Earl of Kent.
Kent. Sister, Edward is my charge, redeem him.
Q. Isab. Edward is my son, and I will keep him.
Kent. Mortimer shall know that he hath wrong'd me! —
[*Aside.*] Hence will I haste to Killingworth Castle,
And rescue aged Edward from his foes.
To be reveng'd on Mortimer and thee.
(*Exeunt* [*on one side* Queen Isabella, Prince Edward, *and* Young Mortimer; *on the other* Kent].)

[Scene III.]

(*Enter* Matrevis *and* Gurney [*and Soldiers*], *with* King [Edward].)

Mat. My lord, be not pensive, we are your friends;
Men are ordain'd to live in misery,
Therefore come, — dalliance dangereth our lives.
K. Edw. Friends, whither must unhappy Edward go?
Will hateful Mortimer appoint no rest?
Must I be vexed like the nightly bird,
Whose sight is loathsome to all winged fowls?
When will the fury of his mind assuage?
When will his heart be satisfied with blood?
If mine will serve, unbowel straight this breast,
And give my heart to Isabel and him;
It is the chiefest mark they level at.
Gur. Not so, my liege, the queen hath given this charge
To keep your grace in safety;
Your passions make your dolours to increase.
K. Edw. This usage makes my misery to increase.
But can my air of life continue long
When all my senses are annoy'd with stench?
Within a dungeon England's king is kept,
Where I am starv'd for want of sustenance.
My daily diet is heart-breaking sobs,
That almost rents the closet of my heart.
Thus lives old Edward not reliev'd by any,
And so must die, though pitied by many.
O, water, gentle friends, to cool my thirst,
And clear my body from foul excrements!
Mat. Here's channel water, as our charge is given.
Sit down, for we'll be barbers to your grace.
K. Edw. Traitors, away! What, will you murder me,
Or choke your sovereign with puddle water?
Gur. No; but wash your face, and shave away your beard,
Lest you be known and so be rescued.
Mat. Why strive you thus? Your labour is in vain!
K. Edw. The wren may strive against the lion's strength,
But all in vain: so vainly do I strive
To seek for mercy at a tyrant's hand.

(*They wash him with puddle water, and shave his beard away.*)

Immortal powers! that knows the painful cares
That wait upon my poor distressed soul,
O level all your looks upon these daring men,
That wrongs their liege and sovereign, England's king!
O Gaveston, 'tis for thee I am wrong'd,
For me, both thou and both the Spencers died!
And for your sakes a thousand wrongs I'll take.
The Spencers' ghosts, wherever they remain,
Wish well to mine; then tush, for them I'll die.

Mat. 'Twixt theirs and yours shall be no enmity.
Come, come away; now put the torches out,
We'll enter in by darkness to Killingworth.

(*Enter* Kent.)

Gur. How now, who comes there?

Mat. Guard the king sure: it is the Earl of Kent.

K. Edw. O gentle brother, help to rescue me!

Mat. Keep them asunder; thrust in the king.

Kent. Soldiers, let me but talk to him one word.

Gur. Lay hands upon the earl for this assault.

Kent. Lay down your weapons, traitors! Yield the king!

Mat. Edmund, yield thou thyself, or thou shalt die.

Kent. Base villains, wherefore do you gripe me thus?

Gur. Bind him and so convey him to the court.

Kent. Where is the court but here? Here is the king;
And I will visit him; why stay you me?

Mat. The court is where Lord Mortimer remains;
Thither shall your honour go; and so farewell.

(*Exeunt* Matrevis *and* Gurney, *with* King Edward.)

Kent. O miserable is that commonweal,
Where lords keep courts, and kings are lockt in prison!

Sol. Wherefore stay we? On, sirs, to the court!

Kent. Ay, lead me whither you will, even to my death,
Seeing that my brother cannot be releas'd.

(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene IV.]

(*Enter* Young Mortimer, *alone.*)

Y. Mor. The king must die, or Mortimer goes down;
The commons now begin to pity him.
Yet he that is the cause of Edward's death,
Is sure to pay for it when his son's of age;
And therefore will I do it cunningly.
This letter, written by a friend of ours,
Contains his death, yet bids them save his life. [*Reads.*]
"*Edwardum occidere nolite timere, bonum est:*
Fear not to kill the king, 'tis good he die."
But read it thus, and that's another sense:
"*Edwardum occidere nolite, timere bonum est:*
Kill not the king, 'tis good to fear the worst."
Unpointed as it is, thus shall it go,
That, being dead, if it chance to be found,
Matrevis and the rest may bear the blame,
And we be quit that caus'd it to be done.
Within this room is lock'd the messenger
That shall convey it, and perform the rest;
And by a secret token that he bears,
Shall he be murdered when the deed is done. —
Lightborn, come forth!

[*Enter* Lightborn.]

Art thou as resolute as thou wast?

Light. What else, my lord? And far more resolute.

Y. Mor. And hast thou cast how to accomplish it?

Light. Ay, ay, and none shall know which way he died.

Y. Mor. But at his looks, Lightborn, thou wilt relent.

LIGHT. Relent! ha, ha! I use much to relent.
Y. MOR. Well, do it bravely, and be secret.
LIGHT. You shall not need to give instructions;
'Tis not the first time I have kill'd a man.
I learn'd in Naples how to poison flowers;
To strangle with a lawn thrust through the throat;
To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point;
Or whilst one is asleep, to take a quill
And blow a little powder in his ears;
Or open his mouth and pour quicksilver down.
And yet I have a braver way than these.
Y. MOR. What's that?
LIGHT. Nay, you shall pardon me; none shall know my tricks.
Y. MOR. I care not how it is, so it be not spied.
Deliver this to Gurney and Matrevis. [*Gives letter.*]
At every ten mile end thou hast a horse.
Take this; [*gives money*] away! and never see me more.
LIGHT. No?
Y. MOR. No;
Unless thou bring me news of Edward's death.
LIGHT. That will I quickly do. Farewell, my lord. [*Exit.*]
Y. MOR. The prince I rule, the queen do I command,
And with a lowly congé to the ground,
The proudest lords salute me as I pass;
I seal, I cancel, I do what I will.
Fear'd am I more than lov'd; — let me be fear'd,
And when I frown, make all the court look pale.
I view the prince with Aristarchus' eyes,
Whose looks were as a breeching to a boy.
They thrust upon me the protectorship,
And sue to me for that that I desire.
While at the council-table, grave enough,
And not unlike a bashful puritan,
First I complain of imbecility,
Saying it is *onus quam gravissimum*,
Till being interrupted by my friends,
Suscepi that *provinciam* as they term it;
And to conclude, I am Protector now.
Now is all sure: the queen and Mortimer
Shall rule the realm, the king; and none rule us.
Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance;
And what I list command who dare control?
Major sum quam cui possit fortuna nocere.
And that this be the coronation-day,
It pleaseth me, and Isabel the queen. [*Trumpets within.*]
The trumpets sound, I must go take my place.

(*Enter the young* KING, QUEEN [ISABELLA], *the* ARCHBISHOP [OF CANTERBURY], *Champion, and Nobles.*)

A. OF CANT. Long live King Edward, by the grace of God
King of England and Lord of Ireland!
CHAM. If any Christian, Heathen, Turk, or Jew,
Dares but affirm that Edward's not true king,
And will avouch his saying with the sword,
I am the champion that will combat him.
Y. MOR. None comes, sound trumpets. [*Trumpets sound.*]
K. EDW. THIRD. Champion, here's to thee. [*Gives a purse.*]
Q. ISAB. Lord Mortimer, now take him to your charge.

(*Enter Soldiers, with* KENT *prisoner.*)

Y. MOR. What traitor have we there with blades and bills?
SOL. Edmund, the Earl of Kent.
K. EDW. THIRD. What hath he done?
SOL. 'A would have taken the king away perforce,
As we were bringing him to Killingworth.
Y. MOR. Did you attempt this rescue, Edmund? Speak.
KENT. Mortimer, I did; he is our king,
And thou compell'st this prince to wear the crown.
Y. MOR. Strike off his head! he shall have martial law.
KENT. Strike off my head! Base traitor, I defy thee!

K. Edw. Third. My lord, he is my uncle, and shall live.
Y. Mor. My lord, he is your enemy, and shall die.
Kent. Stay, villains!
K. Edw. Third. Sweet mother, if I cannot pardon him,
Entreat my Lord Protector for his life.
Q. Isab. Son, be content; I dare not speak a word.
K. Edw. Third. Nor I, and yet methinks I should command;
But, seeing I cannot, I'll entreat for him —
My lord, if you will let my uncle live,
I will requite it when I come to age.
Y. Mor. 'Tis for your highness' good, and for the realm's. —
How often shall I bid you bear him hence?
Kent. Art thou king? Must I die at thy command?
Y. Mor. At our command — Once more away with him.
Kent. Let me but stay and speak; I will not go.
Either my brother or his son is king,
And none of both them thirst for Edmund's blood:
And therefore, soldiers, whither will you hale me?

(*Soldiers hale* Kent *away, and carry him to be beheaded.*)

K. Edw. Third. What safety may I look for at his hands,
If that my uncle shall be murdered thus?
Q. Isab. Fear not, sweet boy, I'll guard thee from thy foes;
Had Edmund liv'd, he would have sought thy death.
Come, son, we'll ride a-hunting in the park.
K. Edw. Third. And shall my uncle Edmund ride with us?
Q. Isab. He is a traitor; think not on him; come. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene V.]

(*Enter* Matrevis *and* Gurney.)

Mat. Gurney, I wonder the king dies not,
Being in a vault up to the knees in water,
To which the channels of the castle run,
From whence a damp continually ariseth,
That were enough to poison any man,
Much more a king brought up so tenderly.
Gur. And so do I, Matrevis: yesternight
I opened but the door to throw him meat,
And I was almost stifled with the savour.
Mat. He hath a body able to endure
More than we can inflict: and therefore now
Let us assail his mind another while.
Gur. Send for him out thence, and I will anger him.
Mat. But stay, who's this?

(*Enter* Lightborn.)

Light. My Lord Protector greets you. [*Gives letter.*]
Gur. What's here? I know not how to construe it.
Mat. Gurney, it was left unpointed for the nonce;
"*Edwardum occidere nolite timere,*"
That's his meaning.
Light. Know ye this token? I must have the king. [*Gives token.*]
Mat. Ay, stay awhile, thou shalt have answer straight. —
[*Aside.*] This villain's sent to make away the king.
Gur. [*aside*]. I thought as much.
Mat. [*aside*]. And when the murder's done,
See how he must be handled for his labour.
Pereat iste! Let him have the king. —
What else? Here is the keys, this is the lake,
Do as you are commanded by my lord.
Light. I know what I must do. Get you away.
Yet be not far off, I shall need your help;
See that in the next room I have a fire,
And get me a spit, and let it be red-hot.
Mat. Very well.
Gur. Need you anything besides?
Light. What else? A table and a feather-bed.
Gur. That's all?

Light. Ay, ay; so, when I call you, bring it in.
Mat. Fear not thou that.
Gur. Here's a light, to go into the dungeon.
[*Gives a light, and then exit with* Matrevis.]
Light. So now
Must I about this gear; ne'er was there any
So finely handled as this king shall be.
For, here's a place indeed, with all my heart!
K. Edw. Who's there? What light is that? Wherefore com'st thou?
Light. To comfort you, and bring you joyful news.
K. Edw. Small comfort finds poor Edward in thy looks.
Villain, I know thou com'st to murder me.
Light. To murder you, my most gracious lord!
Far is it from my heart to do you harm.
The queen sent me to see how you were used,
For she relents at this your misery:
And what eyes can refrain from shedding tears,
To see a king in this most piteous state?
K. Edw. Weep'st thou already? List awhile to me
And then thy heart, were it as Gurney's is,
Or as Matrevis', hewn from the Caucasus,
Yet will it melt, ere I have done my tale.
This dungeon where they keep me is the sink
Wherein the filth of all the castle falls.
Light. O villains!
K. Edw. And there in mire and puddle have I stood
This ten days' space; and, lest that I should sleep,
One plays continually upon a drum.
They give me bread and water, being a king;
So that, for want of sleep and sustenance,
My mind's distempered, and my body's numb'd,
And whether I have limbs or no I know not.
O, would my blood dropp'd out from every vein,
As doth this water from my tattered robes.
Tell Isabel, the queen, I look'd not thus,
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
And there unhors'd the Duke of Cleremont.
Light. O speak no more, my lord! this breaks my heart.
Lie on this bed, and rest yourself awhile.
K. Edw. These looks of thine can harbour nought but death:
I see my tragedy written in thy brows.
Yet stay awhile; forbear thy bloody hand,
And let me see the stroke before it comes,
That even then when I shall lose my life,
My mind may be more steadfast on my God.
Light. What means your highness to mistrust me thus?
K. Edw. What mean'st thou to dissemble with me thus?
Light. These hands were never stain'd with innocent blood,
Nor shall they now be tainted with a king's.
K. Edw. Forgive my thought for having such a thought.
One jewel have I left; receive thou this.
[*Giving jewel.*]
Still fear I, and I know not what's the cause,
But every joint shakes as I give it thee.
O, if thou harbour'st murder in thy heart,
Let this gift change thy mind, and save thy soul!
Know that I am a king: O, at that name
I feel a hell of grief! Where is my crown?
Gone, gone! and do I remain alive?
Light. You're overwatch'd, my lord; lie down and rest.
K. Edw. But that grief keeps me waking, I should sleep;
For not these ten days have these eye-lids clos'd.
Now as I speak they fall, and yet with fear
Open again. O wherefore sitt'st thou here?

LIGHT. If you mistrust me, I'll begone, my lord.
K. EDW. No, no, for if thou mean'st to murder me,
Thou wilt return again, and therefore stay.
LIGHT. He sleeps.
K. EDW. [*waking*]. O let me not die yet! Stay, O stay a while!
LIGHT. How now, my lord?
K. EDW. Something still buzzeth in mine ears,
And tells me if I sleep I never wake;
This fear is that which makes me tremble thus.
And therefore tell me, wherefore art thou come?
LIGHT. To rid thee of thy life. — Matrevis, come!

[*Enter* MATREVIS *and* GURNEY.]

K. EDW. I am too weak and feeble to resist: —
Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul!
LIGHT. Run for the table.
K. EDW. O spare me, or despatch me in a trice.
[MATREVIS *brings in a table.*]
LIGHT. So, lay the table down, and stamp on it,
But not too hard, lest that you bruise his body. [KING EDWARD *is murdered.*]
MAT. I fear me that this cry will raise the town,
And therefore, let us take horse and away.
LIGHT. Tell me, sirs, was it not bravely done?
GUR. Excellent well: take this for thy reward.
(GURNEY *stabs* LIGHTBORN [*who dies*].)
Come, let us cast the body in the moat,
And bear the king's to Mortimer our lord:
Away! (*Exeunt* [*with the bodies*].)

[SCENE VI.]

(*Enter* YOUNG MORTIMER *and* MATREVIS.)

Y. MOR. Is't done, Matrevis, and the murderer dead?
MAT. Ay, my good lord; I would it were undone!
Y. MOR. Matrevis, if thou now growest penitent
I'll be thy ghostly father; therefore choose,
Whether thou wilt be secret in this,
Or else die by the hand of Mortimer.
MAT. Gurney, my lord, is fled, and will, I fear,
Betray us both, therefore let me fly.
Y. MOR. Fly to the savages!
MAT. I humbly thank your honour. [*Exit.*]
Y. MOR. As for myself, I stand as Jove's huge tree,
And others are but shrubs compar'd to me.
All tremble at my name, and I fear none;
Let's see who dare impeach me for his death?

(*Enter* QUEEN ISABELLA.)

Q. ISAB. Ah, Mortimer, the king my son hath news
His father's dead, and we have murdered him!
Y. MOR. What if he have? The king is yet a child.
Q. ISAB. Ay, but he tears his hair, and wrings his hands,
And vows to be reveng'd upon us both.
Into the council-chamber he is gone,
To crave the aid and succour of his peers.
Ay me! see here he comes, and they with him.
Now, Mortimer, begins our tragedy.

(*Enter* KING [EDWARD THE THIRD], *Lords* [*and Attendants*].)

1 LORD. Fear not, my lord, know that you are a king.
K. EDW. THIRD. Villain! —
Y. MOR. How now, my lord!
K. EDW. THIRD. Think not that I am frighted with thy words!
My father's murdered through thy treachery;
And thou shalt die, and on his mournful hearse
Thy hateful and accursed head shall lie,
To witness to the world, that by thy means

His kingly body was too soon interr'd.
Q. Isab. Weep not, sweet son!
K. Edw. Third. Forbid me not to weep, he was my father;
And, had you lov'd him half so well as I,
You could not bear his death thus patiently.
But you, I fear, conspir'd with Mortimer.
1 Lord. Why speak you not unto my lord the king?
Y. Mor. Because I think scorn to be accus'd.
Who is the man dares say I murdered him?
K. Edw. Third. Traitor! in me my loving father speaks,
And plainly saith, 'twas thou that murd'redst him.
Y. Mor. But has your grace no other proof than this?
K. Edw. Third. Yes, if this be the hand of Mortimer. [*Shewing letter.*]
Y. Mor. [*aside.*] False Gurney hath betray'd me and himself.
Q. Isab. [*aside*]. I fear'd as much; murder cannot be hid.
Y. Mor. It is my hand; what gather you by this?
K. Edw. Third. That thither thou didst send a murderer.
Y. Mor. What murderer? Bring forth the man I sent.
K. Edw. Third. Ah, Mortimer, thou knowest that he is slain;
And so shalt thou be too. — Why stays he here?
Bring him unto a hurdle, drag him forth;
Hang him, I say, and set his quarters up;
But bring his head back presently to me.
Q. Isab. For my sake, sweet son, pity Mortimer!
Y. Mor. Madam, entreat not, I will rather die,
Than sue for life unto a paltry boy.
K. Edw. Third. Hence with the traitor! with the murderer!
Y. Mor. Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel
There is a point, to which when men aspire,
They tumble headlong down: that point I touch'd,
And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
Why should I grieve at my declining fall?—
Farewell, fair queen; weep not for Mortimer,
That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,
Goes to discover countries yet unknown.
K. Edw. Third. What! suffer you the traitor to delay?
[Young Mortimer *is taken away by 1 Lord and Attendants.*]
Q. Isab. As thou receivedst thy life from me,
Spill not the blood of gentle Mortimer!
K. Edw. Third. This argues that you spilt my father's blood,
Else would you not entreat for Mortimer.
Q. Isab. I spill his blood? No!
K. Edw. Third. Ay, madam, you; for so the rumour runs.
Q. Isab. That rumour is untrue; for loving thee,
Is this report rais'd on poor Isabel.
K. Edw. Third. I do not think her so unnatural.
2 Lord. My lord, I fear me it will prove too true.
K. Edw. Third. Mother, you are suspected for his death,
And therefore we commit you to the Tower
Till farther trial may be made thereof;
If you be guilty, though I be your son,
Think not to find me slack or pitiful.
Q. Isab. Nay, to my death, for too long have I liv'd
Whenas my son thinks to abridge my days.
K. Edw. Third. Away with her, her words enforce these tears,
And I shall pity her if she speak again.
Q. Isab. Shall I not mourn for my beloved lord,
And with the rest accompany him to his grave?
2 Lord. Thus, madam, 'tis the king's will you shall hence.
Q. Isab. He hath forgotten me; stay, I am his mother.

2 LORD. That boots not; therefore, gentle madam, go.
Q. ISAB. Then come, sweet death, and rid me of this grief. [*Exit.*]

[*Re-enter 1 Lord, with the head of* YOUNG MORTIMER.]

1 LORD. My lord, here is the head of Mortimer.
K. EDW. THIRD. Go fetch my father's hearse, where it shall lie;
And bring my funeral robes.
[*Exeunt Attendants.*]
Accursed head,
Could I have rul'd thee then, as I do now,
Thou had'st not hatch'd this monstrous treachery! —
Here comes the hearse; help me to mourn, my lords.

[*Re-enter Attendants with the hearse and funeral robes.*]

Sweet father, here unto thy murdered ghost
I offer up this wicked traitor's head;
And let these tears, distilling from mine eyes,
Be witness of my grief and innocency.
[*Exeunt.*]

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR

By BEN JONSON

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

Knowell, an old Gentleman.
Edward Knowell, his Son.
Brainworm, the Father's Man.
[George] Downright, a plain Squire.
Wellbred, his Half-Brother.
Kitely, a Merchant.
Captain Bobadill, a Paul's Man.
Master Stephen, a Country Gull.
Master Mathew, the Town Gull.
[Thomas] Cash, Kitely's Man.
[Oliver] Cob, a Water-bearer.
Justice Clement, an old merry Magistrate.
Roger Formal, his Clerk.
[Wellbred's Servant.]

Dame Kitely, Kitely's Wife.
Mistress Bridget, his Sister.
Tib, Cob's Wife.

[Servants, etc.]

Scene: *London.*

PROLOGUE

Though need make many poets, and some such
As art and nature have not better'd much;
Yet ours for want hath not so lov'd the stage,
As he dare serve th' ill customs of the age,
Or purchase your delight at such a rate,
As, for it, he himself must justly hate:
To make a child now swaddled, to proceed
Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,
Past threescore years; or, with three rusty swords,
And help of some few foot-and-half-foot words,
Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars,
And in the tyring-house bring wounds to scars.
He rather prays you will be pleas'd to see
One such to-day, as other plays should be;
Where neither chorus wafts you o'er the seas,
Nor creaking throne comes down the boys to please;
Nor nimble squib is seen to make afeard
The gentlewomen; nor roll'd bullet heard
To say, it thunders; nor tempestuous drum
Rumbles, to tell you when the storm doth come;
But deeds, and language, such as men do use,
And persons, such as comedy would choose,
When she would shew an image of the times,
And sport with human follies, not with crimes;
Except we make 'em such, by loving still
Our popular errors, when we know they're ill.
I mean such errors as you'll all confess,
By laughing at them, they deserve no less:
Which when you heartily do, there's hope left then,
You, that have so grac'd monsters, may like men.

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR

ACT I

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Knowell, [*at the door of his house*].)

Know. A goodly day toward, and a fresh morning. —
Brainworm!

[*Enter* Brainworm].

Call up your young master: bid him rise, sir.
Tell him, I have some business to employ him.
Brai. I will, sir, presently.
Know. But hear you, sirrah,
If he be at his book, disturb him not.
Brai. Well, sir. [*Exit.*]
Know. How happy yet should I esteem myself,
Could I, by any practice, wean the boy
From one vain course of study he affects.
He is a scholar, if a man may trust
The liberal voice of fame in her report,
Of good account in both our Universities,
Either of which hath favour'd him with graces:
But their indulgence must not spring in me
A fond opinion that he cannot err.
Myself was once a student, and, indeed,
Fed with the self-same humour he is now,
Dreaming on nought but idle poetry,
That fruitless and unprofitable art,
Good unto none, but least to the professors;
Which then I thought the mistress of all knowledge;
But since, time and the truth have wak'd my judgment,
And reason taught me better to distinguish
The vain from th' useful learnings.

[*Enter* Master Stephen.]

Cousin Stephen,
What news with you, that you are here so early?

Step. Nothing, but e'en come to see how you do, uncle.

Know. That's kindly done; you are welcome, coz.

Step. Ay, I know that, sir; I would not ha' come else. How does my cousin Edward, uncle?

Know. O, well, coz; go in and see; I doubt he be scarce stirring yet.

Step. Uncle, afore I go in, can you tell me, an he have e'er a book of the sciences of hawking and hunting; I would fain borrow it.

Know. Why, I hope you will not a hawking now, will you?

Step. No, wusse; but I'll practise against next year, uncle. I have bought me a hawk, and a hood, and bells, and all; I lack nothing but a book to keep it by.

Know. Oh, most ridiculous!

Step. Nay, look you now, you are angry, uncle. — Why, you know an a man have not skill in the hawking and hunting languages now-a-days, I'll not give a rush for him: they are more studied than the Greek, or the Latin. He is for no gallant's company without 'em; and by gadslid I scorn it, I, so I do, to be a consort for every humdrum: hang 'em, scroyles! there's nothing in 'em i' the world. What do you talk on it? Because I dwell at Hogsden, I shall keep company with none but the archers of Finsbury, or the citizens that come a ducking to Islington ponds! A fine jest, i' faith! 'Slid, a gentleman mun show himself like a gentleman. Uncle, I pray you be not angry; I know what I have to do, I trow, I am no novice.

Know. You are a prodigal, absurd coxcomb, go to!
Nay, never look at me, 'tis I that speak;

Take 't as you will, sir, I'll not flatter you.
Ha' you not yet found means enow to waste
That which your friends have left you, but you must
Go cast away your money on a kite,
And know not how to keep it, when you ha' done?
O, it's comely! This will make you a gentleman!
Well, cousin, well, I see you are e'en past hope
Of all reclaim. — Ay, so, now you are told on 't,
You look another way.
Step. What would you ha' me do?
Know. What would I have you do? I'll tell you, kinsman;
Learn to be wise, and practise how to thrive;
That would I have you do: and not to spend
Your coin on every bauble that you fancy,
Or every foolish brain that humours you.
I would not have you to invade each place,
Nor thrust yourself on all societies,
Till men's affections, or your own desert,
Should worthily invite you to your rank.
He that is so respectless in his courses,
Oft sells his reputation at cheap market.
Nor would I you should melt away yourself
In flashing bravery, lest, while you affect
To make a blaze of gentry to the world,
A little puff of scorn extinguish it;
And you be left like an unsavoury snuff,
Whose property is only to offend.
I'd ha' you sober, and contain yourself,
Not that your sail be bigger than your boat;
But moderate your expenses now, at first,
As you may keep the same proportion still:
Nor stand so much on your gentility,
Which is an airy and mere borrow'd thing,
From dead men's dust and bones; and none of yours,
Except you make, or hold it. Who comes here?

Scene II.

(Knowell, Stephen. [*Enter a*] *Servant.*)

Serv. Save you, gentlemen!

Step. Nay, we do not stand much on our gentility, friend; yet you are welcome: and I assure you mine uncle here is a man of a thousand a year, Middlesex land. He has but one son in all the world, I am his next heir, at the common law, master Stephen, as simple as I stand here, if my cousin die, as there's hope he will. I have a pretty living o' mine own too, beside, hard by here.

Serv. In good time, sir.

Step. In good time, sir! Why, and in very good time, sir! You do not flout, friend, do you?

Serv. Not I, sir.

Step. Not you, sir! you were not best, sir; an you should, here be them can perceive it, and that quickly too; go to: and they can give it again soundly too, an need be.

Serv. Why, sit, let this satisfy you; good faith, I had no such intent.

Step. Sir, an I thought you had, I would talk with you, and that presently.

Serv. Good master Stephen, so you may, sir, at your pleasure.

Step. And so I would, sir, good my saucy companion! An you were out o' mine uncle's ground, I can tell you; though I do not stand upon my gentility neither, in 't.

Know. Cousin, cousin, will this ne'er be left?

Step. Whoreson, base fellow! a mechanical serving-man! By this cudgel, an 'twere not for shame, I would ——

Know. What would you do, you peremptory gull?
If you cannot be quiet, get you hence.
You see the honest man demeans himself
Modestly tow'rds you, giving no reply
To your unseason'd, quarrelling, rude fashion;
And still you huff it, with a kind of carriage
As void of wit, as of humanity.
Go, get you in; 'fore heaven, I am asham'd

Thou hast a kinsman's interest in me.

[*Exit* Master Stephen.]

Serv. I pray, sir, is this master Knowell's house?

Know. Yes, marry is it, sir.

Serv. I should inquire for a gentleman here, one master Edward Knowell; do you know any such, sir, I pray you?

Know. I should forget myself else, sir.

Serv. Are you the gentleman? Cry you mercy, sir: I was requir'd by a gentleman i' the city, as I rode out at this end o' the town, to deliver you this letter, sir.

Know. To me, sir! What do you mean? pray you remember your court'sy. [*Reads.*] *To his most selected friend, master Edward Knowell.* What might the gentleman's name be, sir, that sent it? Nay, pray you be cover'd.

Serv. One master Wellbred, sir.

Know. Master Wellbred! a young gentleman, is he not?

Serv. The same, sir; master Kitely married his sister; the rich merchant i' the Old Jewry.

Know. You say very true. — Brainworm!

[*Enter* Brainworm.]

Brai. Sir.

Know. Make this honest friend drink here: pray you, go in.

[*Exeunt* Brainworm *and Servant.*]

This letter is directed to my son;
Yet I am Edward Knowell too, and may,
With the safe conscience of good manners, use
The fellow's error to my satisfaction.
Well, I will break it ope (old men are curious),
Be it but for the style's sake and the phrase,
To see if both do answer my son's praises,
Who is almost grown the idolater
Of this young Wellbred. What have we here? What's this?

[*Reads.*] Why, Ned, I beseech thee, hast thou forsworn all thy friends i' the Old Jewry? or dost thou think us all Jews that inhabit there? Yet, if thou dost, come over, and but see our frippery; change an old shirt for a whole smock with us: do not conceive that antipathy between us and Hogsden, as was between Jews and hogsflesh. Leave thy vigilant father alone, to number over his green apricots, evening and morning, o' the north-west wall. An I had been his son, I had sav'd him the labour long since, if taking in all the young wenches that pass by at the back-door, and coddling every kernel of the fruit for 'em, would ha' serv'd. But prithee, come over to me quickly this morning; I have such a present for thee! — our Turkey company never sent the like to the Grand Signior. One is a rhymer, sir, o' your own batch, your own leaven; but doth think himself poet-major o' the town, willing to be shown, and worthy to be seen. The other — I will not venture his description with you, till you come, because I would ha' you make hither with an appetite. If the worst of 'em be not worth your journey, draw your bill of charges, as unconscionable as any Guild-hall verdict will give it you, and you shall be allow'd your viaticum.

(*From the Windmill.*)

From the Bordello it might come as well,
The Spittle, or Pict-hatch. Is this the man
My son hath sung so, for the happiest wit
The choicest brain, the times have sent us forth!
I know not what he may be in the arts,
Nor what in schools; but, surely, for his manners,
I judge him a profane and dissolute wretch;
Worse by possession of such great good gifts,
Being the master of so loose a spirit.
Why, what unhallow'd ruffian would have writ
In such a scurrilous manner to a friend!
Why should he think I tell my apricots,
Or play the Hesperian dragon with my fruit,
To watch it? Well, my son, I'd thought

You'd had more judgment t' have made election
Of your companions, than t' have ta'en on trust
Such petulant, jeering gamesters, that can spare
No argument or subject from their jest.
But I perceive affection makes a fool
Of any man too much the father. — Brainworm!

[*Enter* Brainworm.]

Brai. Sir.

Know. Is the fellow gone that brought this letter?

Brai. Yes, sir, a pretty while since.

Know. And where's your young master?

Brai. In his chamber, sir.

Know. He spake not with the fellow, did he?

Brai. No, sir, he saw him not.

Know. Take you this letter, and deliver it my son; but with no notice that I have open'd it, on your life.

Brai. O Lord, sir! that were a jest indeed. [*Exit.*]

Know. I am resolv'd I will not stop his journey,
Nor practise any violent means to stay
The unbridled course of youth in him; for that
Restrain'd grows more impatient; and in kind
Like to the eager, but the generous greyhound,
Who ne'er so little from his game withheld,
Turns head, and leaps up at his holder's throat.
There is a way of winning more by love
And urging of the modesty, than fear:
Force works on servile natures, not the free.
He that's compell'd to goodness, may be good,
But 'tis but for that fit; where others, drawn
By softness and example, get a habit.
Then, if they stray, but warn 'em, and the same
They should for virtue 've done, they'll do for shame. [*Exit.*]

Scene III.

([*Enter*] E. Knowell, [*with a letter in his hand, followed by*] Brainworm.)

E. Know. Did he open it, say'st thou?

Brai. Yes, o' my word, sir, and read the contents.

E. Know. That scarce contents me. What countenance, prithee, made he i' the reading of it? Was he angry or pleas'd?

Brai. Nay, sir, I saw him not read it, nor open it, I assure your worship.

E. Know. No! How know'st thou then that he did either?

Brai. Marry, sir, because he charg'd me, on my life, to tell nobody that he open'd it; which, unless he had done, he would never fear to have it reveal'd.

E. Know. That's true: well, I thank thee, Brainworm.

[*Enter* Stephen.]

Step. O, Brainworm, didst thou not see a fellow here in what-sha'-call-him doublet? He brought mine uncle a letter e'en now.

Brai. Yes, master Stephen; what of him?

Step. O, I ha' such a mind to beat him —— where is he, canst thou tell?

Brai. Faith, he is not of that mind: he is gone, master Stephen.

Step. Gone! which way? When went he? How long since?

Brai. He is rid hence; he took horse at the street-door.

Step. And I staid i' the fields! Whoreson Scanderbag rogue! O that I had but a horse to fetch him back again!

Brai. Why, you may ha' my master's gelding, to save your longing, sir.

Step. But I ha' no boots, that's the spite on't.

Brai. Why, a fine wisp of hay, roll'd hard, master Stephen.

Step. No, faith, it's no boot to follow him now: let him e'en go and hang. Prithee, help to truss me a little: he does so vex me ——

Brai. You'll be worst vex'd when you are truss'd, master Stephen. Best keep unbrac'd, and walk yourself till you be cold; your choler may founder you else.

Step. By my faith, and so I will, now thou tell'st me on't. How dost thou like my leg, Brainworm?

Brai. A very good leg, master Stephen; but the woollen stocking does not commend it so well.

Step. Foh! the stockings be good enough, now summer is coming on, for the dust: I'll have a pair of silk again' winter, that I go to dwell in the town. I think my leg would shew in a silk hose ——

Brai. Believe me, master Stephen, rarely well.

Step. In sadness, I think it would; I have a reasonable good leg.

Brai. You have an excellent good leg, master Stephen; but I cannot stay to praise it longer now, and I am very sorry for it. [*Exit.*]

Step. Another time will serve, Brainworm, Gramercy for this.

E. Know. Ha, ha, ha!

(*Laughs, having read the letter.*)

Step. 'Slid, I hope he laughs not at me; an he do ——

E. Know. Here was a letter indeed, to be intercepted by a man's father, and do him good with him! He cannot but think most virtuously, both of me, and the sender, sure, that make the careful costermonger of him in our familiar epistles. Well, if he read this with patience I'll be gelt, and troll ballads for Master John Trundle yonder, the rest of my mortality. It is true, and likely, my father may have as much patience as another man, for he takes much physic; and oft taking physic makes a man very patient. But would your packet, Master Wellbred, had arriv'd at him in such a minute of his patience! then ye had known the end of it, which now is doubtful, and threatens —— [*sees* Master Stephen.] What, my wise cousin! Nay, then I'll furnish our feast with one gull more toward the mess. He writes to me of a brace, and here's one, that's three: oh, for a fourth! Fortune, if ever thou'lt use thine eyes, I entreat thee ——

Step. Oh, now I see who he laughed at: he laughed at somebody in that letter. By this good light, an he had laughed at me ——

E. Know. How now, cousin Stephen, melancholy?

Step. Yes, a little: I thought you had laughed at me, cousin.

E. Know. Why, what an I had, coz? What would you ha' done?

Step. By this light, I would ha' told mine uncle.

E. Know. Nay, if you would ha' told your uncle, I did laugh at you, coz.

Step. Did you, indeed?

E. Know. Yes, indeed.

Step. Why then ——

E. Know. What then?

Step. I am satisfied; it is sufficient.

E. Know. Why, be so, gentle coz: and, I pray you, let me entreat a courtesy of you. I am sent for this morning by a friend i' the Old Jewry, to come to him; it is but crossing over the fields to Moorgate. Will you bear me company? I protest it is not to draw you into bond or any plot against the state, coz.

Step. Sir, that's all one an 'twere; you shall command me twice so far as Moorgate, to do you good in such a matter. Do you think I would leave you? I protest ——

E. Know. No, no, you shall not protest, coz.

Step. By my fackings, but I will, by your leave: — I'll protest more to my friend, than I'll speak of at this time.

E. Know. You speak very well, coz.

Step. Nay, not so neither, you shall pardon me: but I speak to serve my turn.

E. Know. Your turn, coz! Do you know what you say? A gentleman of your sort, parts, carriage, and estimation, to talk o' your turn i' this company, and to me alone, like a tankard-bearer at a conduit! fie! A wight that, hitherto, his every step hath left the stamp of a great foot behind him, as every word the savour of a strong spirit, and he! this man! so grac'd, gilded, or, to use a more fit metaphor, so tin-foil'd by nature, as not ten housewives' pewter again' a good time, shows more bright to the world than he!

and he! (as I said last, so I say again, and still shall say it) this man! to conceal such real ornaments as these, and shadow their glory, as a milliner's wife does her wrought stomacher, with a smoky lawn, or a black cyprus! O, coz! it cannot be answer'd; go not about it. Drake's old ship at Deptford may sooner circle the world again. Come, wrong not the quality of your desert, with looking downward, coz; but hold up your head, so: and let the idea of what you are be portrayed i' your face, that men may read i' your physnomy, *Here within this place is to be seen the true, rare, and accomplish'd monster, or miracle of nature*, which is all one. What think you of this, coz?

Step. Why, I do think of it: and I will be more proud, and melancholy, and gentlemanlike, than I have been, I'll insure you.

E. Know. Why, that's resolute, master Stephen! — [*Aside.*] Now, if I can but hold him up to his height, as it is happily begun, it will do well for a suburb humour: we may hap have a match with the city, and play him for forty pound. — Come, coz.

Step. I'll follow you.

E. Know. Follow me! You must go before.

Step. Nay, an I must, I will. Pray you shew me, good cousin. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV.

([*Enter*] Master Mathew.)

Mat. I think this be the house. What, ho!

[*Enter* Cob.]

Cob. Who's there? O, master Mathew! gi' your worship good morrow.

Mat. What, Cob! how dost thou, good Cob? Dost thou inhabit here, Cob?

Cob. Ay, sir, I and my lineage ha' kept a poor house here, in our days.

Mat. Thy lineage, monsieur Cobb! What lineage, what lineage?

Cob. Why, sir, an ancient lineage, and a princely. Mine ance'try came from a king's belly no worse man; and yet no man either, by your worship's leave, I did lie in that, but herring, the king of fish (from his belly I proceed), one o' the monarchs o' the world, I assure you. The first red herring that was broil'd in Adam and Eve's kitchen, do I fetch my pedigree from, by the harrot's book. His cob was my great, great, mighty-great grandfather.

Mat. Why mighty, why mighty, I pray thee?

Cob. O, it was a mighty while ago, sir, and a mighty great cob.

Mat. How know'st thou that?

Cob. How know I! why, I smell his ghost ever and anon.

Mat. Smell a ghost! O unsavoury jest! and the ghost of a herring cob?

Cob. Ay, sir. With favour of your worship's nose, master Mathew, why not the ghost of a herring cob, as well as the ghost of Rasher Bacon?

Mat. Roger Bacon, thou would'st say.

Cob. I say Rasher Bacon. They were both broil'd o' the coals; and a man may smell broil'd meat, I hope! You are a scholar; upsolve me that now.

Mat. O raw ignorance! — Cob, canst thou shew me of a gentleman, one captain Bobadill, where his lodging is?

Cob. O, my guest, sir, you mean.

Mat. Thy guest! alas, ha, ha!

Cob. Why do you laugh, sir? Do you not mean captain Bobadill?

Mat. Cob, pray thee advise thyself well; do not wrong the gentleman, and thyself too. I dare be sworn, he scorns thy house; he! he lodge in such a base obscure place as thy house! Tut, I know his disposition so well, he would not lie in thy bed if thou 'dst gi' it him.

Cob. I will not give it him though, sir. Mass, I thought somewhat was in 't, we could not get him to bed all night. Well, sir, though he lie not o' my bed, he lies o' my bench; an't please you to go up, sir, you shall find him with two cushions under his head, and his cloak wrapt about him, as though he had neither won nor lost, and yet, I warrant, he ne'er cast better in his life, than he has done to-night.

Mat. Why, was he drunk?

Cob. Drunk, sir! you hear not me

say so. Perhaps he swallow'd a tavern-token, or some such device, sir; I have nothing to do withal. I deal with water and not with wine. — Gi' me my tankard there, ho! — God b' wi' you, sir. It's six o'clock: I should ha' carried two turns by this. What ho! my stopple! come.

[*Enter* Tib *with a water-tankard.*]

Mat. Lie in a water-bearer's house! a gentleman of his havings! Well, I'll tell him my mind.

Cob. What, Tib; shew this gentleman up to the captain. [*Exit* Tib *with* Master Mathew.] Oh, an my house were the Brazen-head now! faith it would e'en speak *Moe fools yet.* You should have some now would take this Master Mathew to be a gentleman, at the least. His father's an honest man, a worshipful fishmonger, and so forth; and now does he creep and wriggle into acquaintance with all the brave gallants about the town, such as my guest is (O, my guest is a fine man!), and they flout him invincibly. He useth every day to a merchant's house where I serve water, one master Kitely's, i' the Old Jewry; and here's the jest, he is in love with my master's sister, Mrs. Bridget, and calls her "Mistress"; and there he will sit you a whole afternoon sometimes, reading o' these same abominable, vile (a pox on 'em! I cannot abide them), rascally verses, poyetry, poyetry, and speaking of interludes; 'twill make a man burst to hear him. And the wenches, they do so jeer, and ti-he at him. — Well, should they do so much to me, I'd forswear them all, by the foot of Pharaoh! There's an oath! How many water-bearers shall you hear swear such an oath? O, I have a guest — he teaches me — he does swear the legiblest of any man christ'ned: *By St. George! The foot of Pharaoh! The body of me! As I am a gentleman and a soldier!* such dainty oaths! and withal he does take this same filthy roguish tobacco, the finest and cleanliest! It would do a man good to see the fumes come forth at 's tonnels. — Well, he owes me forty shillings, my wife lent him out of her purse, by sixpence a time, besides his lodging: I would I had it! I shall ha' it, he says, the next action. Helter skelter, hang sorrow, care'll kill a cat, up-tails all, and a louse for the hangman! [*Exit.*]

Scene V.

(Bobadill *is discovered lying on his bench.*)

Bob. Hostess, hostess!

[*Enter* Tib.]

Tib. What say you, sir?

Bob. A cup o' thy small beer, sweet hostess.

Tib. Sir, there's a gentleman below would speak with you.

Bob. A gentleman! 'odso, I am not within.

Tib. My husband told him you were, sir.

Bob. What a plague — what meant he?

Mat. [*below*]. Captain Bobadill!

Bob. Who's there! — Take away the bason, good hostess; — Come up, sir.

Tib. He would desire you to come up, sir. You come into a cleanly house, here!

[*Enter* Mathew.]

Mat. Save you, sir; save you, captain!

Bob. Gentle master Mathew! Is it you, sir? Please you sit down.

Mat. Thank you, good captain; you may see I am somewhat audacious.

Bob. Not so, sir. I was requested to supper last night by a sort of gallants, where you were wish'd for, and drunk to, I assure you.

Mat. Vouchsafe me, by whom, good captain?

Bob. Marry, by young Wellbred, and others. — Why, hostess, a stool here for this gentleman.

Mat. No haste, sir, 'tis very well.

Bob. Body o' me! it was so late ere we parted last night, I can scarce open my eyes yet; I was but new risen, as you came. How passes the day abroad, sir? you can tell.

Mat. Faith, some half hour to seven. Now, trust me, you have exceeding fine lodging here, very neat, and private.

Bob. Ay, sir: sit down, I pray you.

Master Mathew, in any case possess no gentlemen of our acquaintance with notice of my lodging.

Mat. Who? I, sir? No.

Bob. Not that I need to care who know it, for the cabin is convenient; but in regard I would not be too popular, and generally visited, as some are.

Mat. True, captain, I conceive you.

Bob. For, do you see, sir, by the heart of valour in me, except it be to some peculiar and choice spirits, to whom I am extraordinarily engag'd, as yourself, or so, I could not extend thus far.

Mat. O Lord, sir! I resolve so.

Bob. I confess I love a cleanly and quiet privacy, above all the tumult and roar of fortune. What new book ha' you there? What! "Go by, Hieronymo?"

Mat. Ay: did you ever see it acted? Is't not well penn'd?

Bob. Well penn'd! I would fain see all the poets of these times pen such another play as that was: they'll prate and swagger, and keep a stir of art and devices, when, as I am a gentleman, read 'em, they are the most shallow, pitiful, barren fellows that live upon the face of the earth again.

Mat. Indeed here are a number of fine speeches in this book. *O eyes, no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears!* There's a conceit! *Fountains fraught with tears! O life, no life, but lively form of death!* — another. *O world, no world, but mass of public wrongs!* — a third. *Confus'd and fill'd with murder and misdeeds!* — a fourth. O, the muses! Is't not excellent? Is't not simply the best that ever you heard, captain? Ha! how do you like it?

Bob. 'T is good.

Mat. *To thee, the purest object to my sense,*
The most refined essence heaven covers,
Send I these lines, wherein I do commence
The happy state of turtle-billing lovers.
If they prove rough, unpolish'd, harsh, and rude,
Haste made the waste: thus mildly I conclude.

Bob. Nay, proceed, proceed. Where's this?

(Bobadill *is making himself ready all this while.*)

Mat. This, sir! a toy o' mine own, in my nonage; the infancy of my muses. But when will you come and see my study? Good faith, I can shew you some very good things I have done of late. — That boot becomes your leg passing well, captain, methinks.

Bob. So, so; it's the fashion gentlemen now use.

Mat. Troth, captain, and now you speak o' the fashion, master Wellbred's elder brother and I are fall'n out exceedingly. This other day, I happ'ned to enter into some discourse of a hanger, which, I assure you, both for fashion and workmanship, was most peremptory beautiful and gentlemanlike: yet he condemn'd, and cri'd it down for the most pied and ridiculous that he ever saw.

Bob. Squire Downright, the half-brother, was't not?

Mat. Ay, sir, he.

Bob. Hang him, rook! he! why he has no more judgment than a malt-horse. By St. George, I wonder you'd lose a thought upon such an animal; the most peremptory absurd clown of Christendom, this day, he is holden. I protest to you, as I am a gentleman and a soldier, I ne'er chang'd words with his like. By his discourse, he should eat nothing but hay; he was born for the manger, pannier, or pack-saddle. He has not so much as a good phrase in his belly, but all old iron and rusty proverbs: a good commodity for some smith to make hob-nails of.

Mat. Ay, and he thinks to carry it away with his manhood still, where he comes. he brags he will gi' me the bastinado, as I hear.

Bob. How! he the bastinado! How came he by that word, trow?

Mat. Nay, indeed, he said cudgel me; I term'd it so, for my more grace.

Bob. That may be; for I was sure it was none of his word: but when, when said he so?

Mat. Faith, yesterday, they say; a young gallant, a friend of mine, told me so.

Bob. By the foot of Pharaoh, an 'twere my case now, I should send him a chartel presently. The bastinado! a most proper and sufficient dependence, warranted by the great Caranza. Come hither, you shall chartel him; I'll show you a trick or two you shall kill him with at pleasure; the first stoccata, if you will, by this air.

Mat. Indeed, you have absolute knowledge i' the mystery, I have heard, sir.

Bob. Of whom, of whom, ha' you heard it, I beseech you?

Mat. Troth, I have heard it spoken of divers, that you have very rare, and un-in-one-breath-utterable skill, sir.

Bob. By heaven, no, not I; no skill i' the earth; some small rudiments i' the science, as to know my time, distance, or so. I have profest it more for noblemen and gentlemen's use, than mine own practice, I assure you. — Hostess, accommodate us with another bed-staff here quickly. [*Enter* Tib.] Lend us another bed-staff — the woman does not understand the words of action. — Look you, sir: exalt not your point above this state, at any hand, and let your poniard maintain your defence, thus: — give it the gentleman, and leave us. [*Exit* Tib.] So, sir. Come on: O, twine your body more about, that you may fall to a more sweet, comely, gentleman-like guard; so! indifferent: hollow your body more, sir, thus: now, stand fast o' your left leg, note your distance, keep your due proportion of time. — Oh, you disorder your point most irregularly!

Mat. How is the bearing of it now, sir?

Bob. O, out of measure ill. A well experienc'd hand would pass upon you at pleasure.

Mat. How mean you, sir, pass upon me?

Bob. Why, thus, sir, — make a thrust at me — [Master Mathew *pushes at* Bobadill] come in upon the answer, control your point, and make a full career at the body. The best-practis'd gallants of the time name it the passado; a most desperate thrust, believe it.

Mat. Well, come, sir.

Bob. Why, you do not manage your weapon with any facility or grace to invite me. I have no spirit to play with you; your dearth of judgment renders you tedious.

Mat. But one venue, sir.

Bob. "Venue!" fie; the most gross denomination as ever I heard. O, the "stoccata," while you live, sir; note that. — Come put on your cloak, and we'll go to some private place where you are acquainted; some tavern, or so — and have a bit. I'll send for one of these fencers, and he shall breathe you, by my direction; and then I will teach you your trick: you shall kill him with it at the first, if you please. Why, I will learn you, by the true judgment of the eye, hand, and foot, to control any enemy's point i' the world. Should your adversary confront you with a pistol, 'twere nothing, by this hand! You should, by the same rule, control his bullet, in a line, except it were hail shot, and spread. What money have you about you, master Mathew?

Mat. Faith, I ha' not past a two shillings or so.

Bob. 'Tis somewhat with the least; but come; we will have a bunch of radish and salt to taste our wine, and a pipe of tobacco to close the orifice of the stomach: and then we'll call upon young Wellbred. Perhaps we shall meet the Corydon his brother there, and put him to the question. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Kitely, Cash, Downright.)

Kit. Thomas, come hither.
There lies a note within upon my desk;
Here take my key: it is no matter neither. —
Where is the boy?
Cash. Within, sir, i' the warehouse.
Kit. Let him tell over straight that Spanish gold,
And weigh it, with th' pieces of eight. Do you
See the delivery of those silver stuffs
To Master Lucar: tell him, if he will,
He shall ha' the grograns at the rate I told him,

And I will meet him on the Exchange anon.
Cash. Good, sir. [*Exit.*]
Kit. Do you see that fellow, brother Downright?
Dow. Ay, what of him?
Kit. He is a jewel, brother.
I took him of a child up at my door,
And christ'ned him, gave him mine own name, Thomas:
Since bred him at the Hospital; where proving
A toward imp, I call'd him home, and taught him
So much, as I have made him my cashier,
And giv'n him, who had none, a surname, Cash:
And find him in his place so full of faith,
That I durst trust my life into his hands.
Dow. So would not I in any bastard's, brother,
As it is like he is, although I knew
Myself his father. But you said you'd somewhat
To tell me, gentle brother: what is't, what is't?
Kit. Faith, I am very loath to utter it,
As fearing it may hurt your patience;
But that I know your judgment is of strength,
Against the nearness of affection ——
Dow. What need this circumstance? Pray you, be direct.
Kit. I will not say how much I do ascribe
Unto your friendship, nor in what regard
I hold your love; but let my past behaviour,
And usage of your sister, [both] confirm
How well I've been affected to your ——
Dow. You are too tedious; come to the matter, the matter.
Kit. Then, without further ceremony, thus.
My brother Wellbred, sir, I know not how,
Of late is much declin'd in what he was,
And greatly alter'd in his disposition.
When he came first to lodge here in my house,
Ne'er trust me if I were not proud of him:
Methought he bare himself in such a fashion,
So full of man, and sweetness in his carriage,
And what was chief, it show'd not borrowed in him,
But all he did became him as his own,
And seem'd as perfect, proper, and possest,
As breath with life, or colour with the blood.
But now, his course is so irregular,
So loose, affected, and depriv'd of grace,
And he himself withal so far fall'n off
From that first place, as scarce no note remains,
To tell men's judgments where he lately stood.
He's grown a stranger to all due respect,
Forgetful of his friends; and, not content
To stale himself in all societies,
He makes my house here common as a mart,
A theatre, a public receptacle
For giddy humour, and diseased riot;
And here, as in a tavern or a stews,
He and his wild associates spend their hours,
In repetition of lascivious jests,
Swear, leap, drink, dance, and revel night by night,
Control my servants; and, indeed, what not?

Dow. 'Sdeins, I know not what I should say to him, i' the whole world! He values me at a crack'd three-farthings, for aught I see. It will never out o' the flesh that's bred i' the bone. I have told him enough, one would think, if that would serve; but counsel to him is as good as a shoulder of mutton to a sick horse. Well! he knows what to trust to, for George: let him spend, and spend, and domineer, till his heart ache; an he think to be reliev'd by me, when he is got into one o' your city pounds, the counters, he has the wrong sow by the ear, i' faith; and claps his dish at the wrong man's door. I'll lay my hand o' my halfpenny, ere I part with 't to fetch him out, I'll assure him.

Kit. Nay, good brother, let it not trouble you thus.

Dow. 'Sdeath! he mads me; I could eat my very spur-leathers for anger! But, why are you so tame? Why do you not speak to him, and tell him how he disquiets your house?

Kit. O, there are divers reasons to dissuade, brother.
But, would yourself vouchsafe to travail in it
(Though but with plain and easy circumstance),
It would both come much better to his sense,
And savour less of stomach, or of passion.
You are his elder brother, and that title
Both gives and warrants you authority,
Which, by your presence seconded, must breed
A kind of duty in him, and regard;
Whereas, if I should intimate the least,
It would but add contempt to his neglect,
Heap worse on ill, make up a pile of hatred,
That in the rearing would come tott'ring down,
And in the ruin bury all our love.
Nay, more than this, brother; if I should speak,
He would be ready, from his heat of humour,
And overflowing of the vapor in him,
To blow the ears of his familiars
With the false breath of telling what disgraces
And low disparagements I had put upon him:
Whilst they, sir, to relieve him in the fable,
Make their loose comments upon every word,
Gesture, or look, I use; mock me all over,
From my flat cap unto my shining shoes;
And, out of their impetuous rioting phant'sies,
Beget some slander that shall dwell with me.
And what would that be, think you? Marry, this:
They would give out, because my wife is fair,
Myself but lately married, and my sister
Here sojourning a virgin in my house,
That I were jealous! — nay, as sure as death,
That they would say; and, how that I had quarrell'd
My brother purposely, thereby to find
An apt pretext to banish them my house.

Dow. Mass, perhaps so; they're like enough to do it.

Kit. Brother, they would, believe it; so should I,
Like one of these penurious quack-salvers,
But set the bills up to mine own disgrace,
And try experiments upon myself;
Let scorn and envy opportunity
To stab my reputation and good name ——

Scene II.

(Kitely, Downright. [*Enter*] Mathew [*struggling with*] Bobadill.)

Mat. I will speak to him.

Bob. Speak to him! away! By the foot of Pharaoh, you shall not! you shall not do him that grace. — The time of day to you, gentleman o' the house. Is master Wellbred stirring?

Dow. How then? What should he do?

Bob. Gentleman of the house, it is to you. Is he within, sir?

Kit. He came not to his lodging tonight, sir, I assure you.

Dow. Why, do you hear? You!

Bob. The gentleman citizen hath satisfied me;
I'll talk to no scavenger.

[*Exeunt* Bob. *and* Mat.]

Dow. How! scavenger! Stay, sir, stay!

Kit. Nay, brother Downright.

Dow. 'Heart! stand you away, an you love me.

Kit. You shall not follow him now, I pray you, brother, good faith you shall not; I will overrule you.

Dow. Ha! scavenger! Well, go to, I say little; but, by this good day (God forgive me I should swear), if I put it up so, say I am the rankest cow that ever pist. 'Sdeins, an I swallow this, I'll ne'er draw my sword in the sight of Fleet-street again while I live; I'll sit in a barn with madge-howlet, and catch mice first. Scavenger! heart! — and I'll go near to fill that huge tumbrel-slop of yours with somewhat, an I have good luck: your Garagantua breech cannot carry it away so.

Kit. Oh, do not fret yourself thus; never think on 't.

Dow. These are my brother's consorts, these! These are his cam'rades, his walking mates! He's a gallant, a cavaliero too, right hangman cut! Let me not live, an I could not find in my heart to swinge the whole ging of 'em, one after another, and begin with him first. I am griev'd it should be said he is my brother, and take these courses. Well, as he brews, so shall he drink, for George, again. Yet he shall hear on 't, and that tightly too, an I live, i' faith.

Kit. But brother, let your reprehension, then,
Run in an easy current, not o'er high
Carried with rashness, or devouring choler;
But rather use the soft persuading way,
Whose powers will work more gently, and compose
Th' imperfect thoughts you labour to reclaim;
More winning than enforcing the consent.

Dow. Ay, ay, let me alone for that, I warrant you.

Kit. How now! (*Bell rings.*) Oh, the bell rings to breakfast. Brother, I pray you go in, and bear my wife company till I come; I'll but give order for some despatch of business to my servants.

[*Exit* Downright.]

Scene III.

(Kitely. [*Enter*] Cob.)

Kit. What, Cob! our maids will have you by the back, i' faith, for coming so late this morning.

Cob. Perhaps so, sir; take heed somebody have not them by the belly, for walking so late in the evening.

(*He passes by with his tankard.*)

Kit. Well; yet my troubled spirit's somewhat eas'd,
Though not repos'd in that security
As I could wish: but I must be content,
Howe'er I set a face on't to the world.
Would I had lost this finger at a venture,
So Wellbred had ne'er lodged within my house.
Why 't cannot be, where there is such resort
Of wanton gallants and young revellers,
That any woman should be honest long.
Is 't like that factious beauty will preserve
The public weal of chastity unshaken,
When such strong motives muster and make head
Against her single peace? No, no: beware.
When mutual appetite doth meet to treat,
And spirits of one kind and quality
Come once to parley in the pride of blood,
It is no slow conspiracy that follows.
Well, to be plain, if I but thought the time
Had answer'd their affections, all the world
Should not persuade me but I were a cuckold.
Marry, I hope they ha' not got that start;
For opportunity hath balk'd 'em yet,
And shall do still, while I have eyes and ears
To attend the impositions of my heart.
My presence shall be as an iron bar
'Twixt the conspiring motions of desire:
Yea, every look or glance mine eye ejects
Shall check occasion, as one doth his slave,
When he forgets the limits of prescription.

[*Enter* Dame Kitely.]

Dame K. Sister Bridget, pray you fetch down the rose-water, above in the closet. — Sweet-heart, will you come in to breakfast?

Kit. An she have overheard me now!——

Dame Kit. I pray thee, good muss, we stay for you.

Kit. By heaven, I would not for a thousand angels.

Dame K. What ail you, sweet-heart? are you not well? Speak, good muss.

Kit. Troth my head aches extremely on a sudden.

Dame K. [*putting her hand to his forehead*]. O, the Lord!

Kit. How now! What?

Dame K. Alas, how it burns! Muss, keep you warm; good truth it is this new disease, there's a number are troubled withal. For love's sake, sweet-heart, come in out of the air.

Kit. How simple, and how subtle are her answers!
A new disease, and many troubled with it?
Why true; she heard me, all the world to nothing.

Dame K. I pray thee, good sweet-heart,
come in; the air will do you harm, in troth.

Kit. The air! she has me i' the wind. —
Sweet-heart, I'll come to you presently;
'twill away, I hope.

Dame K. Pray Heaven it do. [*Exit.*]

Kit. A new disease! I know not, new or old,
But it may well be call'd poor mortals' plague;
For, like a pestilence, it doth infect
The houses of the brain. First it begins
Solely to work upon the phantasy,
Filling her seat with such pestiferous air
As soon corrupts the judgment; and from thence
Sends like contagion to the memory:
Still each to other giving the infection,
Which as a subtle vapour spreads itself
Confusedly through every sensive part,
Till not a thought or motion in the mind
Be free from the black poison of suspect.
Ah! but what misery is it to know this?
Or, knowing it, to want the mind's erection
In such extremes? Well, I will once more strive,
In spite of this black cloud, myself to be,
And shake the fever off that thus shakes me. [*Exit.*]

Scene IV.

([*Enter*] Brainworm [*disguised like a maimed Soldier*].)

Brai. 'Slid, I cannot choose but laugh to see myself translated thus, from a poor creature to a creator; for now must I create an intolerable sort of lies, or my present profession loses the grace: and yet the lie, to a man of my coat, is as ominous a fruit as the fico. O, sir, it holds for good polity ever, to have that outwardly in vilest estimation, that inwardly is most dear to us: so much for my borrowed shape. Well, the troth is, my old master intends to follow my young master, dry-foot, over Moorfields to London, this morning; now, I knowing of this hunting-match, or rather conspiracy, and to insinuate with my young master (for so must we that are blue waiters, and men of hope and service do, or perhaps we may wear motley at the year's end, and who wears motley, — you know), have got me afore in this disguise, determining here to lie in ambuscado, and intercept him in the mid-way. If I can but get his cloak, his purse, and his hat, nay, any thing to cut him off, that is, to stay his journey, *Veni, vidi, vici*, I may say with Captain Caesar, I am made for ever, i' faith. Well, now I must practise to get the true garb of one of these lance-knights, my arm here, and my —— [Odso! my] young master, and his cousin, master Stephen, as I am true counterfeit man of war, and no soldier! [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* E. Knowell *and* Stephen.]

E. Know. So, sir! and how then, coz?

Step. 'Sfoot! I have lost my purse, I think.

E. Know. How! lost your purse? Where? When had you it?

Step. I cannot tell; stay.

Brai. 'Slid, I am afraid they will know me: would I could get by them!

E. Know. What, ha' you it?

Step. No: I think I was bewitcht, I —— [*Cries.*]

E. Know. Nay, do not weep the loss: hang it, let it go.

Step. Oh, it's here. No, an it had been lost, I had not car'd, but for a jet ring mistress Mary sent me.

E. Know. A jet ring! O the posy, the posy?

Step. Fine, i' faith. —
Though Fancy sleep,
My love is deep.
Meaning, that though I did not fancy her, yet she loved me dearly.

E. Know. Most excellent!

Step. And then I sent her another, and my poesie was,
The deeper the sweeter,
I'll be judg'd by St. Peter.

E. Know. How, by St. Peter? I do not conceive that.

Step. Marry, St. Peter, to make up the metre.

E. Know. Well, there the saint was your good patron, he help'd you at your need; thank him, thank him.

(*Re-enter* Brainworm.)

Brai. I cannot take leave on 'em so; I will venture, come what will. — Gentlemen, please you change a few crowns for a very excellent good blade here? I am a poor gentleman, a soldier, one that, in the better state of my fortunes, scorn'd so mean a refuge; but now it is the humour of necessity to have it so. You seem to be gentlemen well affected to martial men, else I should rather die with silence, than live with shame: however, vouchsafe to remember it is my want speaks, not myself; this condition agrees not with my spirit ——

E. Know. Where hast thou serv'd?

Brai. May it please you, sir, in all the late wars of Bohemia, Hungary, Dalmatia, Poland, — where not, sir? I have been a poor servitor by sea and land any time this fourteen years, and follow'd the fortunes of the best commanders in Christendom. I was twice shot at the taking of Aleppo, once at the relief of Vienna; I have been at Marseilles, Naples, and the Adriatic gulf, a gentleman-slave in the galleys, thrice; where I was most dangerously shot in the head, through both the thighs; and yet, being thus maim'd, I am void of maintenance, nothing left me but my scars, the noted marks of my resolution.

Step. How will you sell this rapier, friend?

Brai. Generous sir, I refer it to your own judgment; you are a gentleman, give me what you please.

Step. True, I am a gentleman, I know that, friend; but what though? I pray you say, what would you ask?

Brai. I assure you, the blade may become the side or thigh of the best prince in Europe.

E. Know. Ay, with a velvet scabbard, I think.

Step. Nay, an 't be mine, it shall have a velvet scabbard, coz, that's flat; I'd not wear it, as it is, an you would give me an angel.

Brai. At your worship's pleasure, sir; [Stephen *examines the blade*] nay, 'tis a most pure Toledo.

Step. I had rather it were a Spaniard. But tell me, what shall I give you for it? An it had a silver hilt ——

E. Know. Come, come, you shall not buy it. Hold, there's a shilling, fellow; take thy rapier.

Step. Why, but I will buy it now, because you say so; and there's another shilling, fellow; I scorn to be out-bidden. What, shall I walk with a cudgel, like Higginbottom, and may have a rapier for money!

E. Know. You may buy one in the city.

Step. Tut! I'll buy this i' the field, so I will: I have a mind to 't, because 'tis a field rapier. Tell me the lowest price.

E. Know. You shall not buy it, I say.

Step. By this money, but I will, though I give more than 'tis worth.

E. Know. Come away, you are a fool.

Step. Friend, I am a fool, that's granted: but I'll have it, for that word's sake. Follow me for your money.

Brai. At your service, sir. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene V.

[*Enter*] Knowell.

Know. I cannot lose the thought yet of this letter
Sent to my son; nor leave t' admire the change
Of manners, and the breeding of our youth
Within the kingdom, since myself was one. —
When I was young, he liv'd not in the stews
Durst have conceiv'd a scorn, and utter'd it,
On a gray head; age was authority
Against a buffoon, and a man had then
A certain reverence paid unto his years,
That had none due unto his life: so much
The sanctity of some prevail'd for others.

But now we all are fall'n; youth, from their fear,
And age, from that which bred it, good example.
Nay, would ourselves were not the first, e'en parents,
That did destroy the hopes in our own children;
Or they not learn'd our vices in their cradles,
And suck'd in our ill customs with their milk!
Ere all their teeth be born, or they can speak,
We make their palates cunning; the first words
We form their tongues with, are licentious jests:
Can it call "whore"? cry "bastard"? O, then, kiss it!
A witty child! Can't swear? The father's darling!
Give it two plums. Nay, rather than 't shall learn
No bawdy song, the mother herself will teach it!
But this is in the infancy, the days
Of the long coat; when it puts on the breeches,
It will put off all this. Ay, it is like,
When it is gone into the bone already!
No, no; this dye goes deeper than the coat,
Or shirt, or skin; it stains into the liver
And heart, in some: and, rather than it should not,
Note what we fathers do! Look how we live!
What mistresses we keep! at what expense!
In our sons' eyes, where they may handle our gifts,
Hear our lascivious courtships, see our dalliance,
Taste of the same provoking meats with us,
To ruin of our states! Nay, when our own
Portion is fled, to prey on the remainder,
We call them into fellowship of vice;
Bait 'em with the young chamber-maid, to seal,
And teach 'em all bad ways to buy affliction.
This is one path; but there are millions more,
In which we spoil our own, with leading them.
Well, I thank heaven, I never yet was he
That travell'd with my son, before sixteen,
To shew him the Venetian courtesans;
Nor read the grammar of cheating I had made,
To my sharp boy, at twelve; repeating still
The rule, *Get money; still, get money, boy;*
No matter by what means; money will do
More, boy, than my lord's letter. Neither have I
Drest snails or mushrooms curiously before him,
Perfum'd my sauces, and taught him how to make 'em;
Preceding still, with my gray gluttony,
At all the ord'naries, and only fear'd
His palates should degenerate, not his manners.
These are the trade of fathers now; however,
My son, I hope, hath met within my threshold
None of these household precedents, which are strong
And swift to rape youth to their precipice.
But let the house at home be ne'er so clean
Swept, or kept sweet from filth, nay dust and cobwebs,
If he will live abroad with his companions,
In dung and leystals, it is worth a fear;
Nor is the danger of conversing less
Than all that I have mention'd of example.

[*Enter* Brainworm, *disguised as before.*]

Brai. [*aside*]. My master! nay, faith, have at you; I am flesht now, I have sped so well. — Worshipful sir, I beseech you, respect the estate of a poor soldier; I am asham'd of this base course of life, — God's my comfort — but extremity provokes me to 't: what remedy?

Know. I have not for you, now.

Brai. By the faith I bear unto truth, gentleman, it is no ordinary custom in me, but only to preserve manhood. I protest to you, a man I have been: a man I may be, by your sweet bounty.

Know. Pray thee, good friend, be satisfied.

Brai. Good sir, by that hand, you may do the part of a kind gentleman, in lending a poor soldier the price of two cans of beer, a matter of small value: the king of heaven shall pay you, and I shall rest thankful. Sweet worship ——

Know. Nay, an you be so importunate ——

Brai. Oh, tender sir! need will have its course; I was not made to this vile use. Well, the edge of the enemy could not have abated me so much: it's hard when a man hath serv'd in his prince's cause, and be thus (*weeps*). Honourable worship, let me derive a small piece of silver from you, it shall not be given in the course of time. By this good ground, I was fain to pawn my rapier last night for a poor supper; I had suck'd the hilts long before, I am a pagan else. Sweet honour ——

Know. Believe me, I am taken with some wonder,
To think a fellow of thy outward presence,
Should, in the frame and fashion of his mind,
Be so degenerate, and sordid-base.
Art thou a man, and sham'st thou not to beg?
To practise such a servile kind of life?
Why, were thy education ne'er so mean,
Having thy limbs, a thousand fairer courses
Offer themselves to thy election.
Either the wars might still supply thy wants,
Or service of some virtuous gentleman,
Or honest labour; nay, what can I name,
But would become thee better than to beg:
But men of thy condition feed on sloth,
As doth the beetle on the dung she breeds in;
Nor caring how the metal of your minds
Is eaten with the rust of idleness.
Now, afore me, whate'er he be, that should
Relieve a person of thy quality,
While thou insist'st in this loose desperate course,
I would esteem the sin not thine, but his.

Brai. Faith, sir, I would gladly find some other course, if so ——

Know. Ay, you'd gladly find it, but you will not seek it.

Brai. Alas, sir, where should a man seek? In the wars, there's no ascent by desert in these days; but —— and for service, would it were as soon purchas'd, as wisht for! The air's my comfort. — [*Sighs*] — I know what I would say.

Know. What's thy name?

Brai. Please you, Fitz-Sword, sir.

Know. Fitz-Sword!
Say that a man should entertain thee now,
Wouldst thou be honest, humble, just, and true?

Brai. Sir, by the place and honour of a soldier ——

Know. Nay, nay, I like not these affected oaths. Speak plainly, man, what think'st thou of my words?

Brai. Nothing, sir, but wish my fortunes were as happy as my service should be honest.

Know. Well, follow me; I'll prove thee, if thy deeds
Will carry a proportion to thy words.
[*Exit.*]

Brai. Yes, sir, straight; I'll but garter my hose. Oh that my belly were hoopt now, for I am ready to burst with laughing! never was bottle or bagpipe fuller. 'Slid, was there ever seen a fox in years to betray himself thus! Now shall I be possest of all his counsels; and, by that conduit, my young master. Well, he is resolv'd to prove my honesty; faith, and I'm resolv'd to prove his patience: oh, I shall abuse him intolerably. This small piece of service will bring him clean out of love with the soldier for ever. He will never come within the sign of it, the sight of a cassock, or a musket-rest again. He will hate the musters at Mile-end for it, to his dying day. It's no matter, let the world think me a bad counterfeit, if I cannot give him the slip at an instant. Why, this is better than to have staid his journey. Well, I'll follow him. Oh, how I long to be employed! [*Exit.*]

ACT III

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Master Mathew, Wellbred, *and* Bobadill).

Mat. Yes, faith, sir, we were at your lodging to seek you too.

Wel. Oh, I came not there to-night.

Bob. Your brother delivered us as much.

Wel. Who, my brother Downright?

Bob. He. Mr. Wellbred, I know not in what kind you hold me; but let me say to you this: as sure as honour, I esteem it so much out of the sunshine of reputation, to throw the least beam of regard upon such a ——

Wel. Sir, I must hear no ill words of my brother.

Bob. I protest to you, as I have a thing to be sav'd about me, I never saw any gentleman-like part ——

Wel. Good captain, faces about to some other discourse.

Bob. With your leave, sir, an there were no more men living upon the face of the earth, I should not fancy him, by St. George!

Mat. Troth, nor I; he is of a rustical cut, I know not how: he doth not carry himself like a gentleman of fashion.

Wel. Oh, master Mathew, that's a grace peculiar but to a few, *quos aequus amavit Jupiter.*

Mat. I understand you, sir.

Wel. No question, you do, — [*aside*] or do you not, sir.

(*Enter* E. Knowell [*and* Stephen].)

Ned Knowell! by my soul, welcome: how dost thou, sweet spirit, my genius? 'Slid, I shall love Apollo and the mad Thespian girls the better, while I live, for this, my dear Fury; now I see there's some love in thee. Sirrah, these be the two I writ to thee of: nay, what a drowsy humour is this now! Why dost thou not speak?

E. Know. Oh, you are a fine gallant; you sent me a rare letter.

Wel. Why, was 't not rare?

E. Know. Yes, I'll be sworn, I was ne'er guilty of reading the like; match it in all Pliny, or Symmachus's epistles, and I'll have my judgment burn'd in the ear for a rogue: make much of thy vein, for it is inimitable. But I marle what camel it was, that had the carriage of it; for, doubtless, he was no ordinary beast that brought it.

Wel. Why?

E. Know. "Why?" say'st thou! Why, dost thou think that any reasonable creature, especially in the morning, the sober time of the day too, could have mista'en my father for me?

Wel. 'Slid, you jest, I hope.

E. Know. Indeed, the best use we can turn it to, is to make a jest on't, now: but I'll assure you, my father had the full view of your flourishing style some hour before I saw it.

Wel. What a dull slave was this! But, sirrah, what said he to it, i' faith?

E. Know. Nay, I know not what he said; but I have a shrewd guess what he thought.

Wel. What, what?

E. Know. Marry, that thou art some strange, dissolute young fellow, and I — a grain or two better, for keeping thee company.

Wel. Tut! that thought is like the moon in her last quarter, 't will change shortly. But, sirrah, I pray thee be acquainted with my two hang-by's here; thou wilt take exceeding pleasure in 'em if thou hear'st 'em once go; my wind-instruments; I'll wind 'em up —— But what strange piece of silence is this? The sign of the Dumb Man?

E. Know. Oh, sir, a kinsman of mine, one that may make your music the fuller, an he please; he has his humour, sir.

Wel. Oh, what is't, what is't?

E. Know. Nay, I'll neither do your judgment nor his folly that wrong, as to prepare your apprehension; I'll leave him to the mercy o' your search; if you can take him, so!

Wel. Well, captain Bobadill, master Mathew, pray you know this gentleman here; he is a friend of mine, and one that will deserve your affection. — I know not your name, sir (*to* Stephen), but I shall be glad of any occasion to render me more familiar to you.

Step. My name is master Stephen, sir; I am this gentleman's own cousin, sir; his father is mine uncle, sir. I am somewhat melancholy, but you shall command me, sir, in whatsoever is incident to a gentleman.

Bob. (*to* E. Knowell). Sir, I must tell you this, I am no general man; but for master Wellbred's sake (you may embrace it at what height of favour you please), I do communicate with you, and conceive you to be a gentleman of some parts; I love few words.

E. Know. And I fewer, sir; I have scarce enough to thank you.

Mat. But are you, indeed, sir, so given to it?

Step. Ay, truly, sir, I am mightily given to melancholy.

Mat. Oh, it's your only fine humour, sir: your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir. I am melancholy myself, diver times, sir, and then do I no more but take pen and paper presently, and overflow you half a score, or a dozen of sonnets at a sitting.

E. Know. (*aside*). Sure he utters them then by the gross.

Step. Truly, sir, and I love such things out of measure.

E. Know. I' faith, better than in measure, I'll undertake.

Mat. Why, I pray you, sir, make use of my study; it's at your service.

Step. I thank you, sir, I shall be bold I warrant you; have you a stool there to be melancholy upon?

Mat. That I have, sir, and some papers there of mine own doing, at idle hours, that you'll say there's some sparks of wit in 'em, when you see them.

Wel. [*aside*]. Would the sparks would kindle once, and become a fire amongst 'em! I might see self-love burnt for her heresy.

Step. Cousin, is it well? Am I melancholy enough?

E. Know. Oh ay, excellent.

Wel. Captain Bobadill, why muse you so?

E. Know. He is melancholy too.

Bob. Faith, sir, I was thinking of a most honourable piece of service, was perform'd to-morrow, being St. Mark's day, shall be some ten years now.

E. Know. In what place, captain?

Bob. Why, at the beleag'ring of Strigonium, where, in less than two hours, seven hundred resolute gentlemen, as any were in Europe, lost their lives upon the breach. I'll tell you, gentlemen, it was the first, but the best leaguer that ever I beheld with these eyes, except the taking in of — what do you call it? last year, by the Genoways; but that, of all other, was the most fatal and dangerous exploit that ever I was rang'd in, since I first bore arms before the face of the enemy, as I am a gentleman and a soldier!

Step. So! I had as lief as an angel I could swear as well as that gentleman.

E. Know. Then, you were a servitor at both, it seems; at Strigonium, and what do you call't?

Bob. O lord, sir! By St. George, I was the first man that ent'red the breach; and had I not effected it with resolution, I had been slain if I had had a million of lives.

E. Know. 'Twas pity you had not ten; a cat's and your own, i' faith. But, was it possible?

Mat. Pray you mark this discourse, sir.

Step. So I do.

Bob. I assure you, upon my reputation, 'tis true, and yourself shall confess.

E. Know. [*aside*]. You must bring me to the rack, first.

Bob. Observe me judicially, sweet sir: they had planted me three demi-culverins just in the mouth of the breach; now, sir, as we were to give on, their master-gunner (a man of no mean skill and mark, you must think), confronts me with his linstock, ready to give fire; I, spying his intendment, discharg'd my petronel in his bosom, and with these single arms, my poor rapier, ran violently upon the Moors that guarded the ordnance, and put 'em pellmell to the sword.

Wel. To the sword! To the rapier, captain.

E. Know. Oh, it was a good figure observ'd, sir. But did you all this, captain, without hurting your blade?

Bob. Without any impeach o' the earth: you shall perceive, sir. [*Shews his rapier.*] It is the most fortunate weapon that ever rid on poor gentleman's thigh. Shall I tell you, sir? You talk of Morglay, Excalibur, Durindana, or so; tut! I lend no credit to that is fabled of 'em. I know the virtue of mine own, and therefore I dare the boldlier maintain it.

Step. I marle whether it be a Toledo or no.

Bob. A most perfect Toledo, I assure you, sir.

Step. I have a countryman of his here.

Mat. Pray you, let's see, sir; yes, faith, it is.

Bob. This a Toledo! Pish!

Step. Why do you pish, captain?

Bob. A Fleming, by heaven! I'll buy them for a guilder a-piece, an I would have a thousand of them.

E. Know. How say you, cousin? I told you thus much.

Wel. Where bought you it, master Stephen?

Step. Of a scurvy rogue soldier: a hundred of lice go with him! He swore it was a Toledo.

Bob. A poor provant rapier, no better.

Mat. Mass, I think it be indeed, now I look on't better.

E. Know. Nay, the longer you look on 't, the worse. Put it up, put it up.

Step. Well, I will put it up; but by — I have forgot the captain's oath, I thought to ha' sworn by it — an e'er I meet him ——

Wel. O, it is past help now, sir; you must have patience.

Step. Whoreson, coney-catching rascal! I could eat the very hilts for anger.

E. Know. A sign of good digestion; you have an ostrich stomach, cousin.

Step. A stomach! Would I had him here, you should see an I had a stomach.

Wel. It's better as 'tis. — Come, gentlemen, shall we go?

Scene II.

E. Knowell, Master Stephen, Wellbred, Bobadill, Master Mathew.

([*Enter*] Brainworm, [*disguised as before.*])

E. Know. A miracle, cousin; look here, look here!

Step. Oh — God's lid. By your leave, do you know me, sir?

Brai. Ay, sir, I know you by sight.

Step. You sold me a rapier, did you not?

Brai. Yes, marry, did I, sir.

Step. You said it was a Toledo, ha?

Brai. True, I did so.

Step. But it is none.

Brai. No, sir, I confess it; it is none.

Step. Do you confess it? Gentlemen, bear witness, he has confest it: — By God's will, an you had not confest it ——

E. Know. Oh, cousin, forbear, forbear!

Step. Nay, I have done, cousin.

Wel. Why, you have done like a gentleman; he has confest it, what would you more?

Step. Yet, by his leave, he is a rascal, under his favour, do you see.

E. Know. Ay, by his leave, he is, and under favour: a pretty piece of civility! Sirrah, how dost thou like him?

Wel. Oh, it's a most precious fool, make much on him. I can compare him to nothing more happily than a drum; for every one may play upon him.

E. Know. No, no, a child's whistle were far the fitter.

Brai. Shall I entreat a word with you?

E. Know. With me, sir? You have not another Toledo to sell, ha' you?

Brai. You are conceited, sir. Your name is Master Knowell, as I take it?

E. Know. You are i' the right; you mean not to proceed in the catechism, do you?

Brai. No, sir; I am none of that coat.

E. Know. Of as bare a coat, though. Well, say, sir.

Brai. [*taking* E. Know. *aside.*] Faith, sir, I am but servant to the drum extraordinary, and indeed, this smoky varnish being washt off, and three or four patches remov'd, I appear your worship's in reversion, after the decease of your good father, — Brainworm.

E. Know. Brainworm! 'Slight, what breath of a conjurer hath blown thee hither in this shape?

Brai. The breath o' your letter, sir, this morning; the same that blew you to the Windmill, and your father after you.

E. Know. My father!

Brai. Nay, never start, 'tis true; he has follow'd you over the fields by the foot, as you would do a hare i' the snow.

E. Know. Sirrah Wellbred, what shall we do, sirrah? My father is come over after me.

Wel. Thy father! Where is he?

Brai. At justice Clement's house, in Coleman-street, where he but stays my return; and then ——

Wel. Who's this? Brainworm!

Brai. The same, sir.

Wel. Why how, in the name of wit, com'st thou transmuted thus?

Brai. Faith, a device, a device; nay, for the love of reason, gentlemen, and avoiding the danger, stand not here; withdraw, and I'll tell you all.

Wel. But art thou sure he will stay thy return?

Brai. Do I live, sir? What a question is that!

Wel. We'll prorogue his expectation, then, a little: Brainworm, thou shalt go with us. — Come on, gentlemen. — Nay, I pray thee, sweet Ned, droop not; 'heart, an our wits be so wretchedly dull, that one old plodding brain can outstrip us all, would we were e'en prest to make porters of, and serve out the remnant of our days in Thames-street, or at Custom-house quay, in a civil war against the carmen!

Brai. Amen, amen, amen, say I. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene III.

([*Enter*] Kitely *and* Cash.)

Kit. What says he, Thomas? Did you speak with him?

Cash. He will expect you, sir, within this half hour.

Kit. Has he the money ready, can you tell?

Cash. Yes, sir, the money was brought in last night.

Kit. O, that is well; fetch me my cloak, my cloak! — [*Exit* Cash.]

Stay, let me see, an hour to go and come;
Ay, that will be the least; and then 'twill be
An hour before I can dispatch with him,
Or very near; well, I will say two hours.
Two hours! ha! things never dreamt of yet,
May be contriv'd, ay, and effected too,
In two hours' absence; well, I will not go.
Two hours! No, fleering Opportunity,
I will not give your subtilty that scope.
Who will not judge him worthy to be robb'd,
That sets his doors wide open to a thief,
And shews the felon where his treasure lies?
Again, what earthy spirit but will attempt
To taste the fruit of beauty's golden tree,
When leaden sleep seals up the dragon's eyes?
I will not go. Business, go by for once.
No, beauty, no; you are of too good caract
To be left so, without a guard, or open.
Your lustre, too, 'll inflame at any distance,
Draw courtship to you, as a jet doth straws;
Put motion in a stone, strike fire from ice,
Nay, make a porter leap you with his burden.
You must be then kept up, close, and well watch'd,
For, give you opportunity, no quick-sand
Devours or swallows swifter! He that lends
His wife, if she be fair, or time or place,
Compels her to be false. I will not go!
The dangers are too many: — and then the dressing
Is a most main attractive! Our great heads
Within this city never were in safety
Since our wives wore these little caps. I'll change 'em;
I'll change 'em straight in mine: mine shall no more

Wear three-piled acorns, to make my horns ache,
Nor will I go; I am resolv’d for that.

[*Re-enter* Cash *with a cloak.*]

Carry in my cloak again. Yet stay. Yet do, too:
I will defer going, on all occasions.
Cash. Sir, Snare, your scrivener, will be there with th’ bonds.
Kit. That’s true: fool on me! I had clean forgot it;
I must go. What’s a clock?
Cash. Exchange-time, sir.
Kit. ’Heart, then will Wellbred presently be here too,
With one or other of his loose consorts.
I am a knave if I know what to say,
What course to take, or which way to resolve.
My brain, methinks, is like an hour-glass,
Wherein my imaginations run like sands,
Filling up time; but then are turn’d and turn’d:
So that I know not what to stay upon,
And less, to put in act. — It shall be so.
Nay, I dare build upon his secrecy,
He knows not to deceive me. — Thomas!
Cash. Sir.
Kit. Yet now I have bethought me, too, I will not. —
Thomas, is Cob within?
Cash. I think he be, sir.
Kit. But he’ll prate too, there is no speech of him.
No, there were no man o’ the earth to Thomas,
If I durst trust him; there is all the doubt.
But should he have a chink in him, I were gone.
Lost i’ my fame for ever, talk for th’ Exchange!
The manner he hath stood with, till this present,
Doth promise no such change: what should I fear then?
Well, come what will, I’ll tempt my fortune once.
Thomas — you may deceive me, but, I hope —
Your love to me is more —
Cash. Sir, if a servant’s
Duty, with faith, may be call’d love, you are
More than in hope, you are possess’d of it.
Kit. I thank you heartily, Thomas: give me your hand:
With all my heart, good Thomas. I have, Thomas,
A secret to impart unto you — but,
When once you have it, I must seal your lips up;
So far I tell you, Thomas.
Cash. Sir, for that ——
Kit. Nay, hear me out. Think I esteem you, Thomas,
When I will let you in thus to my private.
It is a thing sits nearer to my crest,
Than thou art ’ware of, Thomas; if thou should’st
Reveal it, but ——
Cash. How, I reveal it?
Kit. Nay,
I do not think thou would’st; but if thou should’st,
’Twere a great weakness.
Cash. A great treachery:
Give it no other name.
Kit. Thou wilt not do’t, then?
Cash. Sir, if I do, mankind disclaim me ever!
Kit. He will not swear, he has some reservation,
Some conceal’d purpose, and close meaning sure;
Else, being urg’d so much, how should he choose
But lend an oath to all this protestation?
He’s no precisian, that I’m certain of,
Nor rigid Roman Catholic: he’ll play
At fayles, and tick-tack; I have heard him swear.
What should I think of it? Urge him again,
And by some other way? I will do so.
Well, Thomas, thou hast sworn not to disclose: —
Yes, you did swear?
Cash. Not yet, sir, but I will,
Please you —
Kit. No, Thomas, I dare take thy word,
But, if thou wilt swear, do as thou think’st good;

I am resolv'd without it; at thy pleasure.
Cash. By my soul's safety then, sir, I protest,
My tongue shall ne'er take knowledge of a word
Deliver'd me in nature of your trust.
Kit. It is too much; these ceremonies need not;
I know thy faith to be as firm as rock.
Thomas, come hither, near; we cannot be
Too private in this business. So it is, —
[*Aside.*] Now he has sworn, I dare the safelier venture.
I have of late, by divers observations ——
[*Aside.*] But whether his oath can bind him, yea, or no,
Being not taken lawfully? Ha! say you?
I will ask council ere I do not proceed: —
Thomas, it will be now too long to stay,
I'll spy some fitter time soon, or to-morrow.
Cash. Sir, at your pleasure.
Kit. I will think: — and, Thomas,
I pray you search the books 'gainst my return,
For the receipts 'twixt me and Traps.
Cash. I will, sir.
Kit. And hear you, if your mistress' brother, Wellbred,
Chance to bring hither any gentlemen
Ere I come back, let one straight bring me word.
Cash. Very well, sir.
Kit. To the Exchange, do you hear?
Or here in Coleman-street, to justice Clement's.
Forget it not, nor be not out of the way.
Cash. I will not, sir.
Kit. I pray you have a care on't.
Or, whether he come or no, if any other,
Stranger, or else; fail not to send me word.
Cash. I shall not, sir.
Kit. Be't your special business
Now to remember it.
Cash. Sir, I warrant you.
Kit. But, Thomas, this is not the secret, Thomas,
I told you of.
Cash. No, sir; I do suppose it.
Kit. Believe me, it is not.
Cash. Sir, I do believe you.
Kit. By heaven it is not, that's enough. But, Thomas,
I would not you should utter it, do you see,
To any creature living; yet I care not.
Well, I must hence. Thomas, conceive thus much;
It was a trial of you, when I meant
So deep a secret to you; I mean not this,
But that I have to tell you; this is nothing, this.
But, Thomas, keep this from my wife, I charge you,
Lock'd up in silence, midnight, buried here. —
No greater hell than to be slave to fear.
[*Exit.*]
Cash. *Lock'd up in silence, midnight, buried here!*
Whence should this flood of passion, trow, take head? ha!
Best dream no longer of this running humour,
For fear I sink; the violence of the stream
Already hath transported me so far,
That I can feel no ground at all. But soft —
Oh, 'tis our water-bearer: somewhat has crost him now.

Scene IV.

(Cash. [*Enter*] Cob, [*hastily*].)

Cob. Fasting-days! what tell you me of fasting-days? 'Slid, would they were all on a light fire for me! They say the whole world shall be consum'd with fire one day, but would I had these Ember-weeks and villanous Fridays burnt in the mean time, and then ——

Cash. Why, how now, Cob? What moves thee to this choler, ha?

Cob. Collar, master Thomas! I scorn your collar, I, sir; I am none o' your cart-horse, though I carry and draw water. An you offer to ride me with your collar or halter either, I may hap shew you a jade's trick, sir.

Cash. O, you'll slip your head out of the collar? Why, goodman Cob, you mistake me.

Cob. Nay, I have my rheum, and I can be angry as well as another, sir.

Cash. Thy rheum, Cob! Thy humour, thy humour — thou mistak'st.

Cob. Humour! mack, I think it be so indeed. What is that humour? Some rare thing, I warrant.

Cash. Marry I'll tell thee, Cob: it is a gentleman-like monster, bred in the special gallantry of our time, by affectation, and fed by folly.

Cob. How! must it be fed?

Cash. Oh ay, humour is nothing if it be not fed; didst thou never hear that? It's a common phrase, *Feed my humour.*

Cob. I'll none on it: humour, avaunt! I know you not, be gone! Let who will make hungry meals for your monstership, it shall not be I. Feed you, quoth he! 'Slid, I ha' much ado to feed myself; especially on these lean rascally days too; an't had been any other day but a fasting-day — a plague on them all for me! By this light, one might have done the commonwealth good service, and have drown'd them all i' the flood, two or three hundred thousand years ago. O, I do stomach them hugely. I have a maw now, and 'twere for sir Bevis his horse, against 'em.

Cash. I pray thee, good Cob, what makes thee so out of love with fasting days?

Cob. Marry, that which will make any man out of love with 'em, I think; their bad conditions, an you will needs know. First, they are of a Flemish breed, I am sure on't, for they raven up more butter than all the days of the week beside; next, they stink of fish and leek-porridge miserably; thirdly, they'll keep a man devoutly hungry all day, and at night send him supperless to bed.

Cash. Indeed, these are faults, Cob.

Cob. Nay, an this were all, 'twere something; but they are the only known enemies to my generation. A fasting-day no sooner comes, but my lineage goes to wrack; poor cobs! they smoke for it, they are made martyrs o' the gridiron, they melt in passion: and your maids too know this, and yet would have me turn Hannibal, and eat my own flesh and blood. My princely coz (*Pulls out a red herring*), fear nothing; I have not the heart to devour you, an I might be made as rich as king Cophetua. O that I had room for my tears, I could weep salt-water enough now to preserve the lives of ten thousand of my kin! But I may curse none but these filthy almanacs; for an 'twere not for them, these days of persecution would never be known. I'll be hang'd an some fishmonger's son do not make of 'em, and puts in more fasting-days than he should do, because he would utter his father's dried stock-fish and stinking conger.

Cash. 'Slight, peace! Thou'lt be beaten like a stock-fish else. Here is master Mathew. Now must I look out for a messenger to my master. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene V.

([*Enter*] Wellbred, E. Knowell, Brainworm, Mathew, Bobadill, *and* Stephen.)

Wel. Beshrew me, but it was an absolute good jest, and exceedingly well carried!

E. Know. Ay, and our ignorance maintain'd it as well, did it not?

Wel. Yes, faith; but was it possible thou shouldst not know him? I forgive master Stephen, for he is stupidity itself.

E. Know. 'Fore God, not I, an I might have been join'd patten with one of the seven wise masters for knowing him. He had so writhen himself into the habit of one of your poor infantry, your decay'd, ruinous, worm-eaten gentlemen of the round; such as have vowed to sit on the skirts of the city, let your provost and his half-dozen of halberdiers do what they can; and have translated begging out of the old hackney-pace to a fine easy amble, and made it run as smooth off the tongue as a shove-groat shilling. Into the likeness of one of these reformados had he moulded himself so perfectly, observing every trick of their action, as, varying the accent, wearing with an emphasis, indeed, all with so special and exquisite a grace, that, hadst thou seen him, thou wouldst have sworn he might have been sergeant-major, if not lieutenant-colonel to the regiment.

Wel. Why, Brainworm, who would

have thought thou hadst been such an artificer?

E. Know. An artificer! an architect. Except a man had studied begging all his life time, and been a weaver of language from his infancy for the clothing of it, I never saw his rival.

Wel. Where got'st thou this coat, I marle?

Brai. Of a Houndsditch man, sir, one of the devil's near kinsmen, a broker.

Wel. That cannot be, if the proverb hold; for *A crafty knave needs no broker.*

Brai. True, sir; but I did *need a broker, ergo* ——

Wel. Well put off: — *no crafty knave*, you'll say.

E. Know. Tut, he has more of these shifts.

Brai. And yet, where I have one the broker has ten, sir.

[*Re-enter* Cash.]

Cash. Francis! Martin! Ne'er a one to be found now? What a spite's this!

Wel. How now, Thomas? Is my brother Kitely within?

Cash. No, sir, my master went forth e'en now; but master Downright is within. — Cob! what, Cob! Is he gone too?

Wel. Whither went your master, Thomas, canst thou tell?

Cash. I know not: to justice Clement's, I think, sir. — Cob!

E. Know. Justice Clement! what's he?

Wel. Why, dost thou not know him? He is a city-magistrate, a justice here, an excellent good lawyer, and a great scholar; but the only mad, merry old fellow in Europe. I show'd him you the other day.

E. Know. Oh, is that he? I remember him now. Good faith, and he is a very strange presence methinks; it shows as if he stood out of the rank from other men: I have heard many of his jests i' the University. They say he will commit a man for taking the wall of his horse.

Wel. Ay, or wearing his cloak on one shoulder, or serving of God; any thing indeed, if it come in the way of his humour.

(Cash *goes in and out calling.*)

Cash. Gasper! Martin! Cob! 'Heart, where should they be, trow?

Bob. Master Kitely's man, pray thee vouchsafe us the lighting of this match.

Cash. Fire on your match! No time but now to *vouchsafe?* — Francis! Cob! [*Exit.*]

Bob. Body o' me! here's the remainder of seven pound since yesterday was seven-night. 'Tis your right Trinidado: did you never take any, master Stephen?

Step. No, truly, sir; but I'll learn to take it now, since you commend it so.

Bob. Sir, believe me upon my relation, for what I tell you, the world shall not reprove. I have been in the Indies, where this herb grows, where neither myself, nor a dozen gentlemen more of my knowledge, have received the taste of any other nutriment in the world, for the space of one-and-twenty weeks, but the fume of this simple only; therefore it cannot be but 'tis most divine. Further, take it in the nature, in the true kind; so, it makes an antidote, that, had you taken the most deadly poisonous plant in all Italy, it should expel it, and clarify you, with as much ease as I speak. And for your green wound, — your Balsamum and your St. John's wort, are all mere gulleries and trash to it, especially your Trinidado: your Nicotian is good too. I could say what I know of the virtue of it, for the expulsion of rheums, raw humours, crudities, obstructions, with a thousand of this kind; but I profess myself no quacksalver. Only thus much; by Hercules, I do hold it, and will affirm it before any prince in Europe, to be the most sovereign and precious weed that ever the earth tend'red to the use of man.

E. Know. This speech would ha' done decently in a tobacco-trader's mouth.

[*Re-enter* Cash *with* Cob.]

Cash. At justice Clement's he is, in the middle of Coleman-street.

Cob. Oh, oh!

Bob. Where's the match I gave thee, master Kitely's man?

Cash. Would his match and he, and pipe and all, were at Sancto Domingo! I had forgot it. [*Exit.*]

Cob. By God's me, I marle what pleasure or felicity they have in taking this roguish tobacco. It's good for nothing but to choke a man, and fill him full of smoke and embers. There were four died out of one house last week with taking of it, and two more the bell went for yesternight; one of them, they say, will ne'er scape it; he voided a bushel of soot yesterday, upward and downward. By the stocks, an there were no wiser men than I, I'd have it present whipping, man or woman, that should but deal with a tobacco pipe. Why, it will stifle them all in the end, as many as use it; it's little better than ratsbane or rosaker.

(BOBADILL *beats him with a cudgel.*)

ALL. Oh, good captain, hold, hold!

BOB. You base cullion, you!

(*Re-enter* CASH.)

CASH. Sir, here's your match. — Come, thou must needs be talking too, thou'rt well enough serv'd.

COB. Nay, he will not meddle with his match, I warrant you. Well, it shall be a dear beating, an I live.

BOB. Do you prate, do you murmur?

E. KNOW. Nay, good captain, will you regard the humour of a fool? Away, knave.

WEL. Thomas, get him away.

[*Exit* CASH *with* COB.]

BOB. A whoreson filthy slave, a dungworm, an excrement! Body o' Caesar, but that I scorn to let forth so mean a spirit, I'd have stabb'd him to the earth.

WEL. Marry, the law forbid, sir!

BOB. By Pharaoh's foot, I would have done it.

STEP. Oh, he swears most admirably! By Pharaoh's foot! Body o' Caesar! — I shall never do it, sure. Upon mine honour, and by St. George — No, I have not the right grace.

MAT. Master Stephen, will you any? By this air, the most divine tobacco that ever I drunk.

STEP. None, I thank you, sir. O, this gentleman does it rarely too: but nothing like the other. By this air! As I am a gentleman! By ——

[*Exeunt* BOB. *and* MAT.]

BRAI. Master, glance, glance! master Wellbred!

(STEPHEN *is practising to the post.*)

STEP. As I have somewhat to be saved, I protest ——

WEL. You are a fool; it needs no affidavit.

E. KNOW. Cousin, will you any tobacco?

STEP. I, sir! Upon my reputation ——

E. KNOW. How now, cousin!

STEP. I protest, as I am a gentleman, but no soldier, indeed ——

ERL. No, master Stephen! As I remember, your name is ent'red in the artillery-garden.

STEP. Ay, sir, that's true. Cousin, may I swear "as I am a soldier" by that?

E. KNOW. O yes, that you may; it is all you have for your money.

STEP. Then, as I am a gentleman and a soldier, it is "divine tobacco!"

WEL. But soft, where's master Mathew? Gone?

BRAI. No, sir; they went in here.

WEL. O let's follow them. Master Mathew is gone to salute his mistress in verse; we shall ha' the happiness to hear some of his poetry now; he never comes unfurnish'd. — Brainworm!

STEP. Brainworm! Where? Is this Brainworm?

E. KNOW. Ay, cousin; no words of it, upon your gentility.

STEP. Not I, body o' me! By this air! St. George! and the foot of Pharaoh!

WEL. Rare! Your cousin's discourse is simply drawn out with oaths.

E. KNOW. 'Tis larded with 'em; a kind of French dressing, if you love it.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

([*Enter*] KITELY, COB.)

KIT. Ha! how many are there, sayest thou?

COB. Marry, sir, your brother, master Wellbred ——

KIT. Tut, beside him: what strangers are there, man?

COB. Strangers? let me see, one, two; mass, I know not well, there are so many.

Kit. How! so many?

Cob. Ay, there's some five or six of them at the most.

Kit. [*aside*]. A swarm, a swarm!
Spite of the devil, how they sting my head
With forked stings, thus wide and large! — But, Cob,
How long hast thou been coming hither, Cob?

Cob. A little while, sir.

Kit. Didst thou come running?

Cob. No, sir.

Kit. [*aside*]. Nay, then I am familiar with thy haste.
Bane to my fortunes! what meant I to marry?
I, that before was rankt in such content,
My mind at rest too, in so soft a peace,
Being free master of mine own free thoughts,
And now become a slave? What! never sigh,
Be of good cheer, man; for thou art a cuckold:
'Tis done, 'tis done! Nay, when such flowing-store,
Plenty itself, falls in[to] my wife's lap,
The cornucopiae will be mine, I know. —
But, Cob,
What entertainment had they? I am sure
My sister and my wife would bid them welcome: ha?

Cob. Like enough, sir; yet I heard not a word of it.

Kit. No; —
[*Aside.*] Their lips were seal'd with kisses, and the voice,
Drown'd in a flood of joy at their arrival,
Had lost her motion, state, and faculty. —
Cob, which of them was't that first kist my wife,
My sister, I should say? My wife, alas!
I fear not her; ha! who was it say'st thou?

Cob. By my troth, sir, will you have the truth of it?

Kit. Oh, ay, good Cob, I pray thee heartily.

Cob. Then I am a vagabond, and fitter for Bridewell than your worship's company, if I saw any body to be kist, unless they would have kist the post in the middle of the warehouse; for there I left them all at their tobacco, with a pox!

Kit. How! were they not gone in then ere thou cam'st!

Cob. O no, sir.

Kit. Spite of the devil! what do I stay here then? Cob, follow me. [*Exit.*]

Cob. Nay, soft and fair; I have eggs on the spit; I cannot go yet, sir. Now am I, for some five and fifty reasons, hammering, hammering revenge: oh for three or four gallons of vinegar, to sharpen my wits! Revenge, vinegar revenge, vinegar and mustard revenge! Nay, an he had not lien in my house, 'twould never have griev'd me; but being my guest, one that, I'll be sworn, my wife has lent him her smock off her back, while his own shirt has been at washing; pawn'd her neckerchers for clean bands for him; sold almost all my platters, to buy him tobacco; and he to turn monster of ingratitude, and strike his lawful host! Well, I hope to raise up an host of fury for't: here comes justice Clement.

Scene VII.

(Cob. [*Enter*] Justice Clement, Knowell, Formal.)

Clem. What's master Kitely gone, Roger?

Form. Ay, sir.

Clem. 'Heart o' me! what made him leave us so abruptly? — How now, sirrah! what make you here? What would you have, ha?

Cob. An't please your worship, I am a poor neighbour of your worship's ——

Clem. A poor neighbour of mine! Why, speak, poor neighbour.

Cob. I dwell, sir, at the sign of the Water-tankard, hard by the Green Lattice: I have paid scot and lot there any time this eighteen years.

Clem. To the Green Lattice?

Cob. No, sir, to the parish. Marry, I have seldom scapt scot-free at the Lattice.

Clem. O, well; what business has my poor neighbour with me?

Cob. An't like your worship, I am come to crave the peace of your worship.

Clem. Of me, knave! Peace of me, knave! Did I ever hurt thee, or threaten thee, or wrong thee, ha?

Cob. No, sir; but your worship's warrant for one that has wrong'd me, sir. His arms are at too much liberty, I would fain have them bound to a treaty of peace, an my credit could compass it with your worship.

Clem. Thou goest far enough about for't, I am sure.

Know. Why, dost thou go in danger of thy life for him, friend?

Cob. No, sir; but I go in danger of my death every hour, by his means; an I die within a twelve-month and a day, I may swear by the law of the land that he kill'd me.

Clem. How, how, knave, swear he kill'd thee, and by the law? What pretence, what colour, hast thou for that?

Cob. Marry, an't please your worship, both black and blue; colour enough, I warrant you. I have it here to shew your worship.

[*Shows his bruises.*]

Clem. What is he that gave you this, sirrah?

Cob. A gentleman and a soldier, he says he is, of the city here.

Clem. A soldier o' the city! What call you him?

Cob. Captain Bobadill.

Clem. Bobadill! and why did he bob and beat you, sirrah? How began the quarrel betwixt you, ha? Speak truly, knave, I advise you.

Cob. Marry, indeed, an't please your worship, only because I spake against their vagrant tobacco, as I came by 'em when they were taking on't; for nothing else.

Clem. Ha! you speak against tobacco? Formal, his name.

Form. What's your name, sirrah?

Cob. Oliver, sir, Oliver Cob, sir.

Clem. Tell Oliver Cob he shall go to the jail, Formal.

Form. Oliver Cob, my master, justice Clement, says you shall go to the jail.

Cob. O, I beseech your worship, for God's sake, dear master justice!

Clem. God's precious! an such drunkards and tankards as you are, come to dispute of tobacco once, I have done. Away with him!

Cob. O, good master justice! — [*To* Knowell.] Sweet old gentleman!

Know. "Sweet Oliver," would I could do thee any good! — Justice Clement, let me intreat you, sir.

Clem. What! a thread-bare rascal, a beggar, a slave that never drunk out of better than pisspot metal in his life! and he to deprave and abuse the virtue of an herb so generally receiv'd in the courts of princes, the chambers of nobles, the bowers of sweet ladies, the cabins of soldiers! — Roger, away with him? By God's precious —— I say, go to.

Cob. Dear master justice, let me be beaten again, I have deserv'd it: but not the prison, I beseech you.

Know. Alas, poor Oliver!

Clem. Roger, make him a warrant: — he shall not go, I but fear the knave.

Form. Do not stink, sweet Oliver, you shall not go; my master will give you a warrant.

Cob. O, the Lord maintain his worship, his worthy worship!

Clem. Away, dispatch him.

[*Exeunt* Formal *and* Cob.]

— How now, master Knowell, in dumps, in dumps! Come, this becomes not.

Know. Sir, would I could not feel my cares.

Clem. Your cares are nothing: they are like my cap, soon put on, and as soon put off. What! your son is old enough to govern himself; let him run his course, it's the only way to make him a staid man. If he were an unthrift, a ruffian, a drunkard, or a licentious liver, then you had reason; you had reason to take care: but, being none of these, mirth's my witness, an I had twice so many cares as you have, I'd drown them all in a cup of sack. Come, come, let's try it: I muse your parcel of a soldier returns not all this while. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Downright *and* Dame Kitely.)

Dow. Well, sister, I tell you true; and you'll find it so in the end.

Dame K. Alas, brother, what would you have me to do? I cannot help it; you see my brother brings 'em in here; they are his friends.

Dow. His friends! his fiends. 'Slud! they do nothing but haunt him up and down like a sort of unlucky spirits, and tempt him to all manner of villainy that can be thought of. Well, by this light, a little thing would make me play the devil with some of 'em: an 'twere not more for your husband's sake than anything else, I'd make the house too hot for the best on 'em; they should say, and swear, hell were broken loose, ere they went hence. But, by God's will, 'tis nobody's fault but yours; for an you had done as you might have done, they should have been parboil'd, and bak'd too, every mother's son, ere they should ha' come in, e'er a one of 'em.

Dame K. God's my life! did you ever hear the like? What a strange man is this! Could I keep out all them, think you? I should put myself against half a dozen men, should I? Good faith, you'd mad the patient'st body in the world, to hear you talk so, without any sense or reason.

Scene II.

(Downright, Dame Kitely. [*Enter*] Mistress Bridget, Master Mathew, *and* Bobadill; [*followed, at a distance, by*] Wellbred, E. Knowell, Stephen, *and* Brainworm.)

Brid. Servant, in troth you are too prodigal
Of your wit's treasure, thus to pour it forth
Upon so mean a subject as my worth.

Mat. You say well, mistress, and I mean as well.

Dow. Hoy-day, here is stuff!

Wel. O, now stand close; pray Heaven, she can get him to read! He should do it of his own natural impudency.

Brid. Servant, what is this same, I pray you?

Mat. Marry, an elegy, an elegy, an odd toy ——

Dow. To mock an ape withal! O, I could sew up his mouth, now.

Dame K. Sister, I pray you let's hear it.

Dow. Are you rhyme-given too?

Mat. Mistress, I'll read it, if you please.

Brid. Pray you do, servant.

Dow. O, here's no foppery! Death! I can endure the stocks better. [*Exit.*]

E. Know. What ails thy brother? Can he not hold his water at reading of a ballad?

Wel. O, no; a rhyme to him is worse than cheese, or a bag-pipe; but mark; you lose the protestation.

Mat. Faith, I did it in a humour; I know not how it is; but please you come near, sir. This gentleman has judgment, he knows how to censure of a —— pray you, sir, you can judge?

Step. Not I, sir; upon my reputation, and by the foot of Pharaoh!

Wel. O, chide your cousin for swearing.

E. Know. Not I, so long as he does not forswear himself.

Bob. Master Mathew, you abuse the expectation of your dear mistress, and her fair sister. Fie! while you live, avoid this prolixity.

Mat. I shall, sir, well; *incipere dulce.*

E. Know. How, *insipere dulce!* "a sweet thing to be a fool," indeed!

Wel. What, do you take *incipere* in that sense?

E. Know. You do not, you! This was your villainy, to gull him with a mot.

Wel. O, the benchers' phrase: *pauca verba, pauca verba!*

Mat. [*reads*]. *Rare creature, let me speak without offence,*
Would God my rude words had the influence
To rule thy thoughts, as thy fair looks do mine,
Then shouldst thou be his prisoner, who is thine.

E. Know. This is "Hero and Leander."

Wel. O, ay: peace, we shall have more of this.

Mat. *Be not unkind and fair: misshapen stuff*
Is of behaviour boisterous and rough.

Wel. How like you that, sir?

(Master Stephen *answers with shaking his head.*)

E. Know. 'Slight, he shakes his head like a bottle, to feel an there be any brain in it.

Mat. But observe the catastrophe, now:
And I in duty will exceed all other,
As you in beauty do excel Love's mother.

E. Know. Well, I'll have him free of the wit-brokers, for he utters nothing but stol'n remnants.

Wel. O, forgive it him.

E. Know. A filching rogue, hang him! — and from the dead! It's worse than sacrilege.

[Wellbred, E. Knowell, *and* Master Stephen *come forward.*]

Wel. Sister, what ha' you here? Verses? Pray you, let's see. Who made these verses? They are excellent good.

Mat. O, Master Wellbred, 'tis your disposition to say so, sir. They were good i' the morning: I made them *ex tempore* this morning.

Wel. How! *ex tempore?*

Mat. Ay, would I might be hang'd else; ask Captain Bobadill; he saw me write them, at the —— pox on it! — the Star, yonder.

Brai. Can he find in his heart to curse the stars so?

E. Know. Faith, his are even with him; they ha' curst him enough already.

Step. Cousin, how do you like this gentleman's verses?

E. Know. O, admirable! the best that ever I heard, coz.

Step. Body o' Caesar, they are admirable! the best that I ever heard, as I am a soldier!

[*Re-enter* Downright.]

Dow. I am vext, I can hold ne'er a bone of me still. 'Heart, I think thy mean to build and breed here.

Wel. Sister, you have a simple servant here, that crowns your beauty with such encomiums and devices; you may see what it is to be the mistress of a wit that can make your perfections so transparent, that every blear eye may look through them, and see him drown'd over head and ears in the deep well of desire. Sister Kitely, I marvel you get you not a servant that can rhyme, and do tricks too.

Dow. O monster! impudence itself! tricks!

Dame K. Tricks, brother! what tricks?

Brid. Nay, speak, I pray you, what tricks?

Dame K. Ay, never spare any body here; but say, what tricks?

Brid. Passion of my heart, do tricks!

Wel. 'Slight, here's a trick vied and revied! Why, you monkeys, you, what a cater-wauling do you keep! Has he not given you rhymes and verses and tricks?

Dow. O, the fiend!

Wel. Nay, you lamp of virginity, that take it in snuff so, come, and cherish this tame poetical fury in your servant; you'll be begg'd else shortly for a concealment: go to, reward his muse. You cannot give him less than a shilling in conscience, for the book he had it out of cost him a teston at least. How now, gallants! Master Mathew! Captain! what, all sons of silence? No spirit?

Dow. Come, you might practise your ruffian tricks somewhere else, and not here, I wuss; this is no tavern nor drinking-school, to vent your exploits in.

Wel. How now; whose cow has calv'd?

Dow. Marry, that has mine, sir. Nay, boy, never look askance at me for the matter; I'll tell you of it, I, sir; you and your companions mend yourselves when I ha' done.

Wel. My companions!

Dow. Yes, sir, your companions, so I say; I am not afraid of you, nor them neither; your hangbyes here. You must have your poets and your potlings, your soldados and foolados to follow you up and down the city; and here they must come to domineer and swagger. — Sirrah, you ballad-singer, and Slops your fellow there, get you out, get you home; or by this steel, I'll cut off your ears, and that presently.

Wel. 'Slight, stay, let's see what he dare do; cut off his ears! cut a whetstone. You are an ass, do you see? Touch any man here, and by this hand I'll run my rapier to the hilts in you.

Dow. Yea, that would I fain see, boy.

(*They all draw, and they of the house make out to part them.*)

Dame K. O Jesu! murder! Thomas! Gasper!

Brid. Help, help! Thomas!

E. Know. Gentlemen, forbear, I pray you.

Bob. Well, sirrah, you Holofernes; by my hand, I will pink your flesh full of holes with my rapier for this; I will, by this good heaven! Nay, let him come, let him come, gentlemen; by the body of St. George, I'll not kill him.

(*Offer to fight again, and are parted.*)

Cash. Hold, hold, good gentlemen.

Dow. You whoreson, bragging coystril!

Scene III.

(*To them* [*enter*] Kitely.)

Kit. Why, how now! what's the matter, what's the stir here?
Whence springs the quarrel? Thomas! where is he?
Put up your weapons, and put off this rage.
My wife and sister, they are the cause of this.
What, Thomas! where is the knave?

Cash. Here, sir.

Wel. Come, let's go; this is one of my brother's ancient humours, this.

Step. I am glad nobody was hurt by his ancient humour.

[*Exeunt* Wellbred, Stephen, E. Knowell, Bobadill, *and* Brainworm.]

Kit. Why, how now, brother, who enforc'd this brawl?

Dow. A sort of lewd rake-hells, that care neither for God nor the devil. And they must come here to read ballads, and roguery, and trash! I'll mar the knot of 'em ere I sleep, perhaps; especially Bob there, he that's all manner of shapes: and Songs and Sonnets, his fellow.

Brid. Brother, indeed you are too violent,
Too sudden in your humour: and you know
My brother Wellbred's temper will not bear
Any reproof, chiefly in such a presence,
Where every slight disgrace he should receive
Might wound him in opinion and respect.

Dow. Respect! what talk you of respect among such as ha' nor spark of manhood nor good manners? 'Sdeins, I am asham'd to hear you! respect! [*Exit.*]

Brid. Yes, there was one a civil gentleman,
And very worthily demean'd himself.

Kit. O, that was some love of yours, sister.

Brid. A love of mine! I would it were no worse, brother;
You'd pay my portion sooner than you think for.

Dame K. Indeed he seem'd to be a gentleman of a very exceeding fair disposition, and of excellent good parts.

[*Exeunt* Dame Kitely *and* Bridget.]

Kit. Her love, by heaven! my wife's minion.
Fair disposition! excellent good parts!
Death! these phrases are intolerable.
Good parts! how should she know his parts?
His parts! Well, well, well, well, well, well;
It is too plain, too clear: Thomas, come hither.
What, are they gone?

Cash. Ay, sir, they went in.
My mistress and your sister ——

Kit. Are any of the gallants within?

Cash. No, sir, they are all gone.

Kit. Art thou sure of it?

Cash. I can assure you, sir.

Kit. What gentleman was that they prais'd so, Thomas?

Cash. One, they call him Master Knowell, a handsome young gentleman, sir.

Kit. Ay, I thought so; my mind gave me as much.
I'll die, but they have hid him i' the house
Somewhere; I'll go and search; go with me, Thomas:
Be true to me, and thou shalt find me a master. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV.

([*Enter*] Cob.)

Cob. [*knocks at the door*]. What, Tib! Tib, I say!

Tib. [*within*]. How now, what cuckold is that knocks so hard?

(*Enter* Tib.)

O, husband? is it you? What's the news?

Cob. Nay, you have stunn'd me, i' faith; you ha' giv'n me a knock o' the forehead will stick by me. Cuckold! 'Slid, cuckold!

Tib. Away, you fool! did I know it was you that knockt? Come, come, you may call me as bad when you list.

Cob. May I? Tib, you are a whore.

Tib. You lie in your throat, husband.

Cob. How, the lie! and in my throat too! do you long to be stabb'd, ha?

Tib. Why, you are no soldier, I hope.

Cob. O, must you be stabb'd by a soldier? Mass, that's true! When was Bobadill here, your captain? that rogue, that foist, that fencing Burgullion? I'll tickle him, i' faith.

Tib. Why, what's the matter, trow?

Cob. O, he has basted me rarely, sumptuously! but I have it here in black and white [*Pulls out the warrant*], for his black and blue shall pay him. O, the justice, the honestest old brave Trojan in London; I do honour the very flea of his dog. A plague on him, though, he put me once in a villanous filthy fear; marry, it vanished away like the smoke of tobacco; but I was smokt soundly first. I thank the devil, and his good angel, my guest. Well, wife, or Tib, which you will, get you in, and lock the door; I charge you let nobody in to you, wife; nobody in to you; those are my words: not Captain Bob himself, nor the fiend in his likeness. You are a woman, you have flesh and blood enough in you to be tempted; therefore keep the door shut upon all comers.

Tib. I warrant you, there shall nobody enter here without my consent.

Cob. Nor with your consent, sweet Tib; and so I leave you.

Tib. It's more than you know, whether you leave me so.

Cob. How?

Tib. Why, *sweet.*

Cob. Tut, sweet or sour, thou art a flower.
Keep close thy door, I ask no more. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene V.

([*Enter*] E. Knowell, Wellbred, Stephen, *and* Brainworm, [*disguised as before.*])

E. Know. Well, Brainworm, perform this business happily, and thou makest a purchase of my love for ever.

Wel. I' faith, now let thy spirits use their best faculties: but, at any hand, remember the message to my brother; for there's no other means to start him.

Brai. I warrant you, sir; fear nothing; I have a nimble soul has wakt all forces of my phant'sie by this time, and put 'em in true motion. What you have possest me withal, I'll discharge it amply, sir; make it no question. [*Exit.*]

Wel. Forth, and prosper, Brainworm. Faith, Ned, how dost thou approve of my abilities in this device?

E. Know. Troth, well, howsoever; but it will come excellent if it take.

Wel. Take, man! why it cannot choose but take, if the circumstances miscarry not: but, tell me ingenuously, dost thou affect my sister Bridget as thou pretend'st?

E. Know. Friend, am I worth belief?

Wel. Come, do not protest. In faith, she is a maid of good ornament, and much modesty; and, except I conceiv'd very worthily of her, thou should'st not have her.

E. Know. Nay, that, I am afraid, will be a question yet, whether I shall have her, or no.

Wel. 'Slid, thou shalt have her; by this light thou shalt.

E. Know. Nay, do not swear.

Wel. By this hand thou shalt have her; I'll go fetch her presently. 'Point but where to meet, and as I am an honest man I'll bring her.

E. Know. Hold, hold, be temperate.

Wel. Why, by —— what shall I swear by? Thou shalt have her, as I am ——

E. Know. Pray thee, be at peace, I am satisfied; and do believe thou wilt omit no offered occasion to make my desires complete.

Well. Thou shalt see, and know, I will not. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene VI.

([*Enter*] Formal *and* Knowell.)

Form. Was your man a soldier, sir?
Know. Ay, a knave;
I took him begging o' the way, this morning,
As I came over Moorfields.

[*Enter* Brainworm, *disguised as before.*]

O, here he is! — you've made fair speed, believe me,
Where, i' the name of sloth, could you be thus?

Brai. Marry, peace be my comfort, where I thought I should have had little comfort of your worship's service.

Know. How so?

Brai. O, sir, your coming to the city, your entertainment of me, and your sending me to watch —— indeed all the circumstances either of your charge, or my employment, are as open to your son, as to yourself.

Know. How should that be, unless that villain, Brainworm,
Have told him of the letter, and discover'd
All that I strictly charg'd him to conceal?
'Tis so.
Brai. I am partly o' the faith, 'tis so, indeed.

Know. But, how should he know thee to be my man?

Brai. Nay, sir, I cannot tell; unless it be by the black art. Is not your son a scholar, sir?

Know. Yes, but I hope his soul is not allied
Unto such hellish practice: if it were,
I had just cause to weep my part in him,
And curse the time of his creation.
But, where didst thou find them, Fitz-Sword?

Brai. You should rather ask where they found me, sir; for I'll be sworn, I was going along in the street, thinking nothing, when, of a sudden, a voice calls, "Mr. Knowell's man!" another cries, "Soldier!" and thus half a dozen of 'em, till they had call'd me within a house, where I no sooner came, but they seem'd men, and out flew all their rapiers at my bosom, with some three or four score oaths to accompany them; and all to tell me, I was but a dead man, if I did not confess where you were, and how I was employed, and about what; which when they could not get out of me (as, I protest, they must ha' dissected, and made an anatomy o' me first, and so I told 'em), they lock'd me up into a room i' the top of a high house, whence by great miracle (having a light heart) I slid down by a bottom of packthread into the street, and so scapt. But, sir, thus much I can assure you, for I heard it while I was lockt up, there were a great many rich merchants and brave citizens' wives with 'em at a feast; and your son, master Edward, withdrew with one of 'em, and has 'pointed to meet her anon at one Cob's house, a water-bearer that dwells by the Wall. Now, there your worship shall be sure to take him, for there he preys, and fail he will not.

Know. Nor will I fail to break his match, I doubt not.
Go thou along with justice Clement's man,
And stay there for me. At one Cob's house, say'st thou?

Brai. Ay, sir, there you shall have him. [*Exit* Knowell.] Yes — invisible! Much wench, or much son! 'Slight, when he has staid there three or four hours, travail-ing with the expectation of wonders, and at length be deliver'd of air! O the sport that I should then take to look on him, if I durst! But now, I mean to appear no more afore him in this shape: I have another trick to act yet. O that I were so happy as to light on a nupson now of this justice's novice! — Sir, I make you stay somewhat long.

Form. Not a whit, sir. Pray you what do you mean, sir?

Brai. I was putting up some papers.

Form. You ha' been lately in the wars, sir, it seems.

Brai. Marry have I, sir, to my loss, and expense of all, almost.

Form. Troth, sir, I would be glad to bestow a bottle of wine o' you, if it please you to accept it ——

Brai. O, sir ——

Form. But to hear the manner of your services, and your devices in the wars. They say they be very strange, and not like those a man reads in the Roman histories, or sees at Mile-end.

Brai. No, I assure you, sir; why at any time when it please you, I shall be ready to discourse to you all I know; [*aside*] — and more too somewhat.

Form. No better time than now, sir; we'll go to the Windmill; there we shall have a cup of neat grist, we call it. I pray you, sir, let me request you to the Windmill.

Brai. I'll follow you, sir; [*aside*] — and make grist o' you, if I have good luck. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene VII.

([*Enter*] Mathew, E. Knowell, Bobadill, Stephen.)

Mat. Sir, did your eyes ever taste the like clown of him where we were to-day, Mr. Wellbred's half-brother? I think the whole earth cannot shew his parallel, by this daylight.

E. Know. We were now speaking of him: captain Bobadill tells me he is fall'n foul o' you too.

Mat. O, ay, sir, he threat'ned me with the bastinado.

Bob. Ay, but I think, I taught you prevention this morning, for that. You shall kill him beyond question, if you be so generously minded.

Mat. Indeed, it is a most excellent trick. [*Fences.*]

Bob. O, you do not give spirit enough to your motion; you are too tardy, too heavy! O, it must be done like lightning, hay! (*Practises at a post.*)

Mat. Rare, captain!

Bob. Tut! 'tis nothing, an't be not done in a —— *punto.*

E. Know. Captain, did you ever prove yourself upon any of our masters of defence here?

Mat. O good sir! yes, I hope he has.

Bob. I will tell you, sir. Upon my first coming to the city, after my long travel for knowledge in that mystery only, there came three or four of 'em to me, at a gentleman's house, where it was my chance to be resident at that time, to intreat my presence at their schools: and withal so much importun'd me that, I protest to you as I am a gentleman, I was asham'd of their rude demeanour out of all measure. Well, I told 'em that to come to a public school, they should pardon me, it was opposite, in diameter, to my humour; but if so be they would give their attendance at my lodging, I protested to do them what right or favour I could, as I was a gentleman, and so forth.

E. Know. So, sir! then you tried their skill?

Bob. Alas, soon tried: you shall hear, sir. Within two or three days after, they came; and, by honesty, fair sir, believe me, I grac'd them exceedingly, shew'd them some two or three tricks of prevention have purchas'd 'em since a credit to admiration. They cannot deny this; and yet now they hate me; and why? Because I am excellent; and for no other vile reason on the earth.

E. Know. This is strange and barbarous, as ever I heard.

Bob. Nay, for a more instance of their preposterous natures, but note, sir. They have assaulted me some three, four, five, six of them together, as I have walkt alone in divers skirts i' the town, as Turnbull, Whitechapel, Shoreditch, which were then my quarters; and since, upon the Exchange, at my lodging, and at my ordinary: where I have driven them afore me the whole length of a street, in the open view of all our gallants, pitying to hurt them, believe me. Yet all this lenity will not o'ercome their spleen; they will be doing with the pismire, raising a hill a man may spurn abroad with his foot at pleasure. By myself, I could have slain them all, but I delight not in murder. I am loth to bear any other than this bastinado for 'em: yet I hold it good polity not to go disarm'd, for though I be skilful, I may be oppress'd with multitudes.

E. Know. Ay, believe me, may you, sir: and in my conceit, our whole nation should sustain the loss by it, if it were so.

Bob. Alas, no? what's a peculiar man to a nation? Not seen.

E. Know. O, but your skill, sir.

Bob. Indeed, that might be some loss; but who respects it? I will tell you, sir, by the way of private, and under seal; I am a gentleman, and live here obscure, and to myself; but were I known to her majesty and the lords, — observe me, — I would undertake, upon this poor head and life, for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the entire lives of her subjects in general; but to save the one half, nay, three parts of her yearly charge in holding war, and against what enemy soever. And how would I do it, think you?

E. Know. Nay, I know not, nor can I conceive.

Bob. Why thus, sir. I would select nineteen more, to myself, throughout the land; gentlemen they should be of good spirit, strong and able constitution; I would choose them by an instinct, a character that I have: and I would teach these nineteen the special rules, as your *punto*, your *reverso*, your *stoccata*, your *imbroccato*, your *passada*, your *montanto;* till they could all play very near, or altogether, as well as myself. This done, say the enemy were forty thousand strong, we twenty would come into the field the tenth of March, or thereabouts; and we would challenge twenty of the enemy; they could not in their honour refuse us: well, we would kill them; challenge twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them too; and thus would we kill every man his twenty a day, that's twenty score; twenty score, that's two hundred; two hundred a day, five days a thousand: forty thousand; forty times five, five times forty, two hundred days kills them all up by computation. And this will I venture my poor gentleman-like carcase to perform, provided there be no treason practis'd upon us, by fair and discreet manhood; that is, civilly by the sword.

E. Know. Why, are you so sure of your hand, captain, at all times?

Bob. Tut! never miss thrust, upon my reputation with you.

E. Know. I would not stand in Downright's state then, an you meet him, for the wealth of any one street in London.

Bob. Why, sir, you mistake me: if he were here now, by this welkin, I would not draw my weapon on him. Let this gentleman do his mind; but I will bastinado him, by the bright sun, wherever I meet him.

Mat. Faith, and I'll have a fling at him, at my distance.

E. Know. 'God's so, look where he is! yonder he goes.

(Downright *walks over the stage.*)

Dow. What peevish luck have I, I cannot meet with these bragging rascals?

Bob. It is not he, is it?

E. Know. Yes, faith, it is he.

Mat. I'll be hang'd, then, if that were he.

E. Know. Sir, keep your hanging good for some greater matter, for I assure you that was he.

Step. Upon my reputation, it was he.

Bob. Had I thought it had been he, he must not have gone so: but I can hardly be induc'd to believe it was he yet.

E. Know. That I think, sir.

[*Re-enter* Downright.]

But see, he is come again.

Dow. O, Pharaoh's foot, have I found

you? Come draw, to your tools; draw, gipsy, or I'll thrash you.

Bob. Gentleman of valour, I do believe in thee; hear me ——

Dow. Draw your weapon then.

Bob. Tall man, I never thought on it till now —— body of me, I had a warrant of the peace served on me, even now as I came along, by a water-bearer; this gentleman saw it, Master Mathew.

Dow. 'Sdeath! you will not draw then?

(*Beats and disarms him.* Mathew *runs away.*)

Bob. Hold, hold! under thy favour forbear!

Dow. Prate again, as you like this, you whoreson foist you! You'll "control the point," you! Your consort is gone; had he staid he had shar'd with you, sir. [*Exit.*]

Bob. Well, gentlemen, bear witness, I was bound to the peace, by this good day.

E. Know. No, faith, it's an ill day, captain, never reckon it other: but, say you were bound to the peace, the law allows you to defend yourself: that'll prove but a poor excuse.

Bob. I cannot tell, sir; I desire good construction in fair sort. I never sustain'd the like disgrace, by heaven! Sure I was struck with a planet thence, for I had no power to touch my weapon.

E. Know. Ay, like enough; I have heard of many that have been beaten under a planet: go, get you to a surgeon. 'Slid! an these be your tricks, your *passadas*, and your *montantos*, I'll none of them. [*Exit* Bobadill.] O, manners! that this age should bring forth such creatures! that nature should be at leisure to make them! Come, coz.

Step. Mass, I'll ha' this cloak.

E. Know. 'Od's will,'tis Downright's.

Step. Nay, it's mine now, another might have ta'en up as well as I: I'll wear it, so I will.

E. Know. How an he see it? He'll challenge it, assure yourself.

Step. Ay, but he shall not ha' it; I'll say I bought it.

E. Know. Take heed you buy it not too dear, coz. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene VIII.

([*Enter*] Kitely, Wellbred, Dame Kitely, *and* Bridget.)

Kit. Now, trust me, brother, you were much to blame,
T' incense his anger, and disturb the peace
Of my poor house, where there are sentinels
That every minute watch to give alarms
Of civil war, without adjection
Of your assistance or occasion.

Wel. No harm done, brother, I warrant you. Since there is no harm done, anger costs a man nothing; and a tall man is never his own man till he be angry. To keep his valour in obscurity, is to keep himself as it were in a cloak-bag. What's a musician, unless he play? What's a tall man unless he fight? For, indeed, all this my wise brother stands upon absolutely; and that made me fall in with him so resolutely.

Dame K. Ay, but what harm might have come of it, brother!

Wel. Might, sister? So might the good warm clothes your husband wears be poison'd, for any thing he knows: or the wholesome wine he drank, even now at the table.

Kit. [*aside*]. Now, God forbid! O me! now I remember
My wife drank to me last, and chang'd the cup,
And bade me wear this cursed suit to-day.
See, if Heaven suffer murder undiscovered! —
I feel me ill; give me some mithridate,
Some mithridate and oil, good sister, fetch me;
O, I am sick at heart, I burn, I burn.
If you will save my life, go fetch it me.

Wel. O strange humour! my very breath has poison'd him.

Brid. Good brother, be content, what do you mean?
The strength of these extreme conceits will kill you.

Dame K. Beshrew your heart-blood, brother Wellbred, now,
For putting such a toy into his head!

Wel. Is a fit simile a toy? Will he be poison'd with a simile? Brother Kitely, what a strange and idle imagination is this! For shame, be wiser. O' my soul, there's no such matter.

Kit. Am I not sick? How am I then not poison'd?
Am I not poison'd? How am I then so sick?

Dame K. If you be sick, your own thoughts make you sick.

Wel. His jealousy is the poison he has taken.

(*Enter* Brainworm, *disguised like justice* Clement's *man.*)

Brai. Master Kitely, my master, justice Clement, salutes you; and desires to speak with you with all possible speed.

Kit. No time but now, when I think I am sick, very sick! Well, I will wait upon his worship. Thomas! Cob! I must seek them out, and set 'em sentinels till I return. Thomas! Cob! Thomas! [*Exit.*]

Wel. This is perfectly rare, Brainworm; [*takes him aside*] but how got'st thou this apparel of the justice's man?

Brai. Marry, sir, my proper fine penman would needs bestow the grist o' me, at the Windmill, to hear some martial discourse; where I so marshall'd him, that I made him drunk with admiration: and, because too much heat was the cause of his distemper, I stript him stark naked as he lay along asleep, and borrowed his suit to deliver this counterfeit message in, leaving a rusty armour, and an old brown bill to watch him till my return; which shall be, when I ha' pawn'd his apparel, and spent the better part o' the money, perhaps.

Wel. Well, thou art a successful merry knave, Brainworm! his absence will be a good subject for more mirth. I pray thee return to thy young master, and will him to meet me and my sister Bridget at the Tower instantly; for here, tell him, the house is so stor'd with jealousy, there is no room for love to stand upright in. We must get our fortunes committed to some larger prison, say; and than the Tower, I know no better air, nor where the liberty of the house may do us more present service. Away! [*Exit* Brainworm.]

[*Re-enter* Kitely, *talking aside to* Cash.]

Kit. Come hither, Thomas. Now my secret's ripe,
And thou shalt have it: lay to both thine ears.
Hark what I say to thee. I must go forth, Thomas;
Be careful of thy promise, keep good watch,
Note every gallant, and observe him well,
That enters in my absence to thy mistress:
If she would shew him rooms, the jest is stale,
Follow 'em, Thomas, or else hang on him,
And let him not go after; mark their looks;
Note if she offer but to see his band,
Or any other amorous toy about him;
But praise his leg, or foot: or if she say
The day is hot, and bid him feel her hand,
How hot it is; O, that's a monstrous thing!
Note me all this, good Thomas, mark their sighs,
And if they do but whisper, break 'em off:
I'll bear thee out in it. Wilt thou do this?
Wilt thou be true, my Thomas?

Cash. As truth's self, sir.

Kit. Why, I believe thee. Where is Cob, now? Cob! [*Exit.*]

Dame K. He's ever calling for Cob: I wonder how he employs Cob so.

Wel. Indeed, sister, to ask how he employs Cob, is a necessary question for you that are his wife, and a thing not very easy for you to be satisfied in; but this I'll assure you, Cob's wife is an excellent bawd, sister, and oftentimes your husband haunts her house; marry, to what end? I cannot altogether accuse him; imagine you what you think convenient: but I have known fair hides have foul hearts ere now, sister.

Dame K. Never said you truer than that, brother, so much I can tell you for your learning. Thomas, fetch your cloak and go with me. [*Exit* Cash.] I'll after him presently: I would to fortune I could take him there, i' faith. I'd return him his own, I warrant him! [*Exit.*]

Wel. So, let 'em go; this may make sport anon. Now, my fair sister-in-law, that you knew but how happy a thing it were to be fair and beautiful.

Brid. That touches not me, brother.

Wel. That's true; that's even the fault of it; for indeed, beauty stands a woman in no stead, unless it procure her touching. — But, sister, whether it touch you or no, it touches your beauties; and I am sure they will abide the touch; an they do not, a plague of all ceruse, say I! and it touches me too in part, though not in the —— Well, there's a dear and respected friend of mine, sister, stands very strongly and worthily affected toward you, and hath vow'd to inflame whole bonfires of zeal at his heart, in honour of your perfections. I have already engag'd my promise to bring you where you shall hear him confirm much more. Ned Knowell is the man, sister: there's no exception against the party. You are ripe for a husband; and a minute's loss to such an occasion is a great trespass in a wise beauty. What say you, sister? On my soul he loves you; will you give him the meeting?

Brid. Faith, I had very little confidence in mine own constancy, brother, if I durst not meet a man: but this motion of yours savours of an old knight adventurer's servant a little too much, methinks.

Wel. What's that, sister?

Brid. Marry, of the squire.

Wel. No matter if it did, I would be such an one for my friend. But see, who is return'd to hinder us!

[*Re-enter* Kitely.]

Kit. What villany is this? Call'd out on a false message!
This was some plot; I was not sent for. — Bridget,
Where is your sister?

Brid. I think she be gone forth, sir.

Kit. How! is my wife gone forth? Whither, for God's sake?

Brid. She's gone abroad with Thomas.

Kit. Abroad with Thomas! oh, that villain dors me:
He hath discover'd all unto my wife.
Beast that I was, to trust him! Whither, I pray you,
Went she?

Brid. I know not, sir.

Wel. I'll tell you, brother,
Whither I suspect she's gone.

Kit. Whither, good brother?

Wel. To Cob's house, I believe: but, keep my counsel.

Kit. I will, I will: to Cob's house! Doth she haunt Cob's?
She's gone a' purpose now to cuckold me
With that lewd rascal, who, to win her favour,
Hath told her all. [*Exit.*]

Wel. Come, he is once more gone,
Sister, let's lose no time; th' affair is worth it. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene IX.

([*Enter*] Mathew *and* Bobadill.)

Mat. I wonder, captain, what they will say of my going away, ha?

Bob. Why, what should they say, but as of a discreet gentleman; quick, wary, respectful of nature's fair lineaments? and that's all.

Mat. Why so! but what can they say of your beating?

Bob. A rude part, a touch with soft wood, a kind of gross battery us'd, laid on strongly, borne most patiently; and that's all.

Mat. Ay, but would any man have offered it in Venice, as you say?

Bob. Tut! I assure you, no: you shall have there your *nobilis*, your *gentilezza*, come in bravely upon your reverse, stand you close, stand you firm, stand you fair, save your *retricato* with his left leg, come to the *assalto* with the right, thrust with brave steel, defy your base wood! But wherefore do I awake this remembrance? I was fascinated, by Jupiter; fascinated, but I will be unwitch'd and reveng'd by law.

Mat. Do you hear? Is it not best to get a warrant, and have him arrested and brought before justice Clement?

Bob. It were not amiss? Would we had it!

[*Enter* BRAINWORM *disguised as* FORMAL.]

MAT. Why, here comes his man; let's speak to him.

BOB. Agreed, do you speak.

MAT. Save you, sir.

BRAI. With all my heart, sir.

MAT. Sir, there is one Downright hath abus'd this gentleman and myself, and we determine to make our amends by law. Now, if you would do us the favour to procure a warrant to bring him afore your master, you shall be well considered, I assure you, sir.

BRAI. Sir, you know my service is my living; such favours as these gotten of my master is his only preferment, and therefore you must consider me as I may make benefit of my place.

MAT. How is that, sir?

BRAI. Faith, sir, the thing is extraordinary, and the gentleman may be of great account; yet, be he what he will, if you will lay me down a brace of angels in my hand you shall have it, otherwise not.

MAT. How shall we do, captain? He asks a brace of angels; you have no money?

BOB. Not a cross, by fortune.

MAT. Nor I, as I am a gentleman, but two-pence left of my two shillings in the morning for wine and radish: let's find him some pawn.

BOB. Pawn! we have none to the value of his demand.

MAT. O, yes; I'll pawn this jewel in my ear, and you may pawn your silk stockings, and pull up your boots, they will ne'er be mist: it must be done now.

BOB. Well, an there be no remedy, I'll step aside and pull 'em off. [*Withdraws.*]

MAT. Do you hear, sir? We have no store of money at this time, but you shall have good pawns; look you, sir, this jewel, and that gentleman's silk stockings; because we would have it dispatch'd ere we went to our chambers.

BRAI. I am content, sir; I will get you the warrant presently. What's his name, say you? Downright?

MAT. Ay, ay, George Downright.

BRAI. What manner of man is he?

MAT. A tall big man, sir; he goes in a cloak most commonly of silk-russet, laid about with russet lace.

BRAI. 'Tis very good, sir.

MAT. Here, sir, here's my jewel.

BOB. [*returning*]. And here are stockings.

BRAI. Well, gentlemen, I'll procure you this warrant presently; but who will you have to serve it?

MAT. That's true, captain: that must be consider'd.

BOB. Body o' me, I know not; 'tis service of danger.

BRAI. Why, you were best get one o' the varlets o' the city, a serjeant: I'll appoint you one, if you please.

MAT. Will you, sir? Why, we can wish no better.

BOB. We'll leave it to you, sir.

[*Exeunt* BOB. *and* MAT.]

BRAI. This is rare! Now will I go and pawn this cloak of the justice's man's at the broker's for a varlet's suit, and be the varlet myself; and get either more pawns, or more money of Downright, for the arrest. [*Exit.*]

SCENE X.

([*Enter*] KNOWELL.)

KNOW. Oh, here it is; I am glad I have found it now;
Ho! who is within here?
TIB. [*within*]. I am within, sir? What's your pleasure?
KNOW. To know who is within besides yourself.
TIB. Why, sir, you are no constable, I hope?
KNOW. O, fear you the constable? Then I doubt not
You have some guests within deserve that fear.
I'll fetch him straight.

[*Enter* TIB.]

O' God's name, sir!
KNOW. Go to; come tell me, is not young Knowell here?
TIB. Young Knowell! I know none such, sir, o' mine honesty.

Know. Your honesty, dame! It flies too lightly from you.
There is no way but fetch the constable.
Tib. The constable! the man is mad, I think. [*Exit, and claps to the door.*]

[*Enter* Dame Kitely *and* Cash.]

Cash. Ho! who keeps house here?
Know. O, this is the female copesmate of my son:
Now shall I meet him straight.
Dame K. Knock, Thomas, hard.
Cash. Ho, goodwife!

[*Re-enter* Tib.]

Tib. Why, what's the matter with you?
Dame K. Why, woman, grieves it you to ope your door?
Belike you get something to keep it shut.
Tib. What mean these questions, pray ye?
Dame K. So strange you make it! Is not my husband here?
Know. Her husband!
Dame K. My tried husband, master Kitely?
Tib. I hope he needs not to be tried here.
Dame K. No, dame, he does it not for need, but pleasure.
Tib. Neither for need nor pleasure is he here.
Know. This is but a device to balk me withal:

[*Enter* Kitely, *muffled in his cloak.*]

Soft, who is this? 'Tis not my son disguis'd?
Dame K. (*spies her husband come, and runs to him.*) O, sir, have I forestall'd your honest market?
Found your close walks? You stand amaz'd now, do you?
I' faith, I am glad I have smokt you yet at last.
What is your jewel, trow? In, come, let's see her;
Fetch forth your huswife, dame; if she be fairer,
In any honest judgment, than myself,
I'll be content with it: but she is change,
She feeds you fat, she soothes your appetite,
And you are well! Your wife, an honest woman,
Is meat twice sod to you, sir! O, you treachour!
Know. She cannot counterfeit thus palpably.
Kit. Out on thy more than strumpet's impudence!
Steal'st thou thus to thy haunts? and have I taken
Thy bawd and thee, and thy companion, (*Pointing to old* Knowell.)
This hoary-headed letcher, this old goat,
Close at your villainy, and would'st thou 'scuse it
With this stale harlot's jest, accusing me?
O, old incontinent (*to* Knowell), dost thou not shame,
When all thy powers in chastity is spent,
To have a mind so hot, and to entice,
And feed th' enticements of a lustful woman?
Dame K. Out, I defy thee, I, dissembling wretch!
Kit. Defy me, strumpet! Ask thy pander here,
Can he deny it; or that wicked elder?
Know. Why, hear you, sir.
Kit. Tut, tut, tut; never speak:
Thy guilty conscience will discover thee.
Know. What lunacy is this, that haunts this man?
Kit. Well, good wife BA'D, Cob's wife, and you,
That make your husband such a hoddy-doddy;
And you, young apple-squire, and old cuckold-maker;
I'll ha' you every one before a justice:
Nay, you shall answer it, I charge you go.
Know. Marry, with all my heart, sir, I go willingly;
Though I do taste this as a trick put on me,
To punish my impertinent search, and justly,
And half forgive my son for the device.
Kit. Come, will you go?
Dame K. Go! to thy shame believe it

[*Enter* Cob.]

Cob. Why, what's the matter here, what's here to do?
Kit. O, Cob, art thou come? I have been abus'd,
And i' thy house; was never man so wrong'd!
Cob. 'Slid, in my house, my master Kitely!
Who wrongs you in my house?
Kit. Marry, young lust in old, and old in young here:
Thy wife's their bawd, here have I taken 'em.

Cob. How, bawd! is my house come to that? Am I preferr'd thither? Did I not charge you to keep your doors shut, Isbel? and do you let 'em lie open for all comers? (*He falls upon his wife and beats her.*)

Know. Friend, know some cause, before thou beat'st thy wife.
This 's madness in thee.
Cob. Why, is there no cause?
Kit. Yes, I'll shew cause before the justice, Cob:
Come, let her go with me.
Cob. Nay, she shall go.

Tib. Nay, I will go. I'll see an you may be allow'd to make a bundle o' hemp o' your right and lawful wife thus, at every cuckoldy knave's pleasure. Why do you not go?

Kit. A bitter quean! Come, we will ha' you tam'd. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene XI.

([*Enter*] Brainworm, [*disguised as a City Serjeant*].)

Brai. Well, of all my disguises yet, now am I most like myself, being in this serjeant's gown. A man of my present profession never counterfeits, till he lays hold upon a debtor and says he 'rests him; for then he brings him to all manner of unrest. A kind of little kings we are, bearing the diminutive of a mace, made like a young artichoke, that always carries pepper and salt in itself. Well, I know not what danger I undergo by this exploit; pray Heaven I come well off!

[*Enter* Mathew *and* Bobadill.]

Mat. See, I think, yonder in the varlet, by his gown.
Bob. Let's go in quest of him.

Mat. 'Save you, friend! Are not you here by appointment of justice Clement's man?

Brai. Yes, an't please you, sir; he told me two gentlemen had will'd him to procure a warrant from his master, which I have about me, to be serv'd on one Downright.

Mat. It is honestly done of you both; and see where the party comes you must arrest; serve it upon him quickly, afore he be aware.

Bob. Bear back, master Mathew.

[*Enter* Stephen *in* Downright's *cloak.*]

Brai. Master Downright, I arrest you i' the queen's name, and must carry you afore a justice by virtue of this warrant.

Step. Me, friend! I am no Downright, I; I am master Stephen. You do not well to arrest me, I tell you, truly; I am in nobody's bonds nor books, I would you should know it. A plague on you heartily for making me thus afraid afore my time!

Brai. Why, now are you deceived, gentlemen?

Bob. He wears such a cloak, and that deceived us: but see, here 'a comes indeed; this is he, officer.

[*Enter* Downright.]

Dow. Why how now, signior gull! Are you turn'd filcher of late! Come, deliver my cloak.

Step. Your cloak, sir! I bought it even now in open market.

Brai. Master Downright, I have a warrant I must serve upon you, procur'd by these two gentlemen.

Dow. These gentlemen! These rascals! [*Offers to beat them.*]

Brai. Keep the peace, I charge you in her majesty's name.

Dow. I obey thee. What must I do, officer?

Brai. Go before master justice Clement, to answer what they can object against you, sir. I will use you kindly, sir.

Mat. Come, let's before, and make the justice, captain.

Bob. The varlet's a tall man, afore heaven! [*Exeunt* Bob. *and* Mat.]

Dow. Gull, you'll gi' me my cloak.

Step. Sir, I bought it, and I'll keep it.

Dow. You will?

Step. Ay, that I will.

Dow. Officer, there's thy fee, arrest him.

Brai. Master Stephen, I must arrest you.

Step. Arrest me! I scorn it. There, take your cloak, I'll none on't.

Dow. Nay, that shall not serve your turn now, sir. Officer, I'll go with thee to the justice's; bring him along.

Step. Why, is not here your cloak? What would you have?

Dow. I'll ha' you answer it, sir.

Brai. Sir, I'll take your word, and this gentleman's too, for his appearance.

Dow. I'll ha' no words taken: bring him along.

Brai. Sir, I may choose to do that, I may take bail.

Dow. 'Tis true, you may take bail, and choose at another time; but you shall not now, varlet. Bring him along, or I'll swinge you.

Brai. Sir, I pity the gentleman's case; here's your money again.

Dow. 'Sdeins, tell not me of my money; bring him away, I say.

Brai. I warrant you he will go with you of himself, sir.

Dow. Yet more ado?

Brai. [*aside*]. I have made a fair mash on't.

Step. Must I go?

Brai. I know no remedy, master Stephen.

Dow. Come along afore me here; I do not love your hanging look behind.

Step. Why, sir, I hope you cannot hang me for it: can he, fellow?

Brai. I think not, sir; it is but a whipping matter, sure.

Step. Why then let him do his worst, I am resolute. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Clement, Knowell, Kitely, Dame Kitely, Tib, Cash, Cob, *Servants.*)

Clem. Nay, but stay, stay, give me leave: my chair, sirrah. — You, master Knowell, say you went thither to meet your son?

Know. Ay, sir.

Clem. But who directed you thither?

Know. That did mine own man, sir.

Clem. Where is he?

Know. Nay, I know not now; I left him with your clerk, and appointed him to stay here for me.

Clem. My clerk! about what time was this?

Know. Marry, between one and two, as I take it.

Clem. And what time came my man with the false message to you, master Kitely?

Kit. After two, sir.

Clem. Very good: but, mistress Kitely, how chance that you were at Cob's, ha?

Dame K. An't please you, sir, I'll tell you: my brother Wellbred told me that Cob's house was a suspected place ——

Clem. So it appears, methinks: but on.

Dame K. And that my husband us'd thither daily.

Clem. No matter, so he us'd himself well, mistress.

Dame K. True, sir: but you know what grows by such haunts oftentimes.

Clem. I see rank fruits of a jealous brain, mistress Kitely: but did you find your husband there, in that case as you suspected?

Kit. I found her there, sir.

Clem. Did you so? That alters the case. Who gave you knowledge of your wife's being there?

Kit. Marry, that did my brother Wellbred.

Clem. How, Wellbred first tell her; then tell you after! Where is Wellbred?

Kit. Gone with my sister, sir, I know not whither.

Clem. Why this is a mere trick, a device; you are gull'd in this most grossly all. Alas, poor wench! wert thou beaten for this?

Tib. Yes, most pitifully, an't please you.

Cob. And worthily, I hope, if it shall prove so.

Clem. Ay, that's like, and a piece of a sentence. —

[*Enter a Servant.*]

How now, sir! what's the matter?

Serv. Sir, there's a gentleman i' the court without, desires to speak with your worship.

Clem. A gentleman! what is he?

Serv. A soldier, sir, he says.

Clem. A soldier! Take down my armour, my sword quickly. A soldier speak with me! Why, when, knaves! Come on, come on. (*Arms himself*). Hold my cap there, so; give me my gorget, my sword: stand by, I will end your matters anon. —— Let the soldier enter. [*Exit Servant.*]

Scene II.

([Clement, Knowell, *etc. Enter*] Bobadill, [*followed by*] Mathew.)

Now, sir, what ha' you to say to me?

Bob. By your worship's favour ——

Clem. Nay, keep out, sir; I know not your pretence. — You send me word, sir, you are a soldier; why, sir, you shall be answer'd here: here be them have been amongst soldiers. Sir, your pleasure.

Bob. Faith, sir, so it is, this gentleman and myself have been most uncivilly wrong'd and beaten by one Downright, a coarse fellow about the town here; and for mine own part, I protest, being a man in no sort given to this filthy humour of quarrelling, he hath assaulted me in the way of my peace, despoil'd me of mine honour, disarm'd me of my weapons, and rudely laid me along in the open streets, when I not so much as once offer'd to resist him.

Clem. O, God's precious! is this the soldier? Here, take my armour off quickly, 'twill make him swoon, I fear; he is not fit to look on't, that will put up a blow.

Mat. An't please your worship, he was bound to the peace.

Clem. Why, an he were, sir, his hands were not bound, were they?

[*Re-enter Servant.*]

Serv. There's one of the varlets of the city, sir, has brought two gentlemen here; one, upon your worship's warrant.

Clem. My warrant!

Serv. Yes, sir; the officer says, procur'd by these two.

Clem. Bid him come in. [*Exit Servant.*] Set by this picture.

Scene III.

([Clement, Bobadill, *etc. Enter*] Downright, Stephen, *and* Brainworm [*disguised as before*].)

What, Master Downright! Are you brought in at Mr. Freshwater's suit here?

Dow. I' faith, sir, and here's another brought at my suit.

Clem. What are you, sir?

Step. A gentleman, sir. O, uncle!

Clem. Uncle! Who? Master Knowell?

Know. Ay, sir; this is a wise kinsman of mine.

Step. God's my witness, uncle, I am wrong'd here monstrously; he charges me with stealing of his cloak, and would I might never stir, if I did not find it in the street by chance.

Dow. O, did you find it now? You said you bought it ere-while.

Step. And you said, I stole it. Nay, now my uncle is here, I'll do well enough with you.

Clem. Well, let this breathe awhile. You that have cause to complain there, stand forth. Had you my warrant for this gentleman's apprehension?

Bob. Ay, an't please your worship.

Clem. Nay, do not speak in passion so. Where had you it?

Bob. Of your clerk, sir.

Clem. That's well! an my clerk can make warrants, and my hand not at 'em!

Where is the warrant — officer, have you it?

Brai. No, sir. Your worship's man, Master Formal, bid me do it for these gentlemen, and he would be my discharge.

Clem. Why, Master Downright, are you such a novice, to be serv'd and never see the warrant?

Dow. Sir, he did not serve it on me.

Clem. No! how then?

Dow. Marry, sir, he came to me, and said he must serve it, and he would use me kindly, and so ——

Clem. O, God's pity, was it so, sir? *He must serve it!* Give me my long sword there, and help me off. So, come on, sir varlet, *I must* cut off your legs, sirrah [Brainworm *kneels*]; nay, stand up, *I'll use you kindly;* I *must* cut off your legs, I say.

(*Flourishes over him with his long sword.*)

Brai. O, good sir, I beseech you; nay, good master justice!

Clem. I *must* do it, there is no remedy; I *must* cut off your legs, sirrah, I *must* cut off your ears, you rascal, I *must* do it: I *must* cut off your nose, I *must* cut off your head.

Brai. O, good your worship!

Clem. Well, rise; how dost thou do now? Dost thou feel thyself well? Hast thou no harm?

Brai. No, I thank your good worship, sir.

Clem. Why so! I said I must cut off thy legs, and I must cut off thy arms, and I must cut off thy head; but I did not do it: so you said you must serve this gentleman with my warrant, but you did not serve him. You knave, you slave, you rogue, do you say you *must*, sirrah! Away with him to the jail; I'll teach you a trick for your *must*, sir.

Brai. Good sir, I beseech you, be good to me.

Clem. Tell him he shall to the jail; away with him, I say.

Brai. Nay, sir, if you will commit me, it shall be for committing more than this: I will not lose by my travail any grain of my fame, certain.

[*Throws off his serjeant's gown.*]

Clem. How is this?

Know. My man Brainworm!

Step. O, yes, uncle; Brainworm has been with my cousin Edward and I all this day.

Clem. I told you all there was some device.

Brai. Nay, excellent justice, since I have laid myself thus open to you, now stand strong for me; both with your sword and your balance.

Clem. Body o' me, a merry knave! give me a bowl of sack. If he belong to you, Master Knowell, I bespeak your patience.

Brai. That is it I have most need of. Sir, if you'll pardon me only, I'll glory in all the rest of my exploits.

Know. Sir, you know I love not to have my favours come hard from me. You have your pardon, though I suspect you shrewdly for being of counsel with my son against me.

Brai. Yes, faith, I have, sir, though you retain'd me doubly this morning for yourself: first, as Brainworm; after, as Fitz-Sword. I was your reform'd soldier, sir. 'Twas I sent you to Cob's upon the errand without end.

Know. Is it possible? or that thou should'st disguise thy language so as I should not know thee?

Brai. O, sir, this has been the day of my metamorphosis. It is not that shape alone that I have run through to-day. I brought this gentleman, master Kitely, a message too, in the form of master Justice's man here, to draw him out o' the way, as well as your worship, while master Wellbred might make a conveyance of mistress Bridget to my young master.

Kit. How! my sister stol'n away?

Know. My son is not married, I hope.

Brai. Faith, sir, they are both as sure as love, a priest, and three thousand pound, which is her portion, can make 'em; and by this time are ready to bespeak their wedding-supper at the Windmill, except some friend here prevent 'em, and invite 'em home.

Clem. Marry, that will I; I thank thee

for putting me in mind on't. Sirrah, go you and fetch them hither upon my warrant. [*Exit Servant.*] Neither's friends have cause to be sorry, if I know the young couple aright. Here, I drink to thee for thy good news. But I pray thee, what hast thou done with my man, Formal?

Brai. Faith, sir, after some ceremony past, as making him drunk, first with story, and then with wine, (but all in kindness,) and stripping him to his shirt, I left him in that cool vein; departed, sold your worship's warrant to these two, pawn'd his livery for that varlet's gown, to serve it in; and thus have brought myself by my activity to your worship's consideration.

Clem. And I will consider thee in another cup of sack. Here's to thee, which having drunk off this my sentence: Pledge me. Thou hast done, or assisted to nothing, in my judgment, but deserves to be pardon'd for the wit of the offence. If thy master, or any man here, be angry with thee, I shall suspect his ingine, while I know him, for't. How now, what noise is that?

[*Enter Servant.*]

Serv. Sir, it is Roger is come home.

Clem. Bring him in, bring him in.

Scene IV.

(*To them* [*enter*] Formal [*in a suit of armour*].)

What! drunk? In arms against me? Your reason, your reason for this?

Form. I beseech your worship to pardon me; I happen'd into ill company by chance, that cast me into a sleep, and stript me of all my clothes.

Clem. Well, tell him I am Justice Clement, and do pardon him: but what is this to your armour? What may that signify?

Form. An't please you, sir, it hung up i' the room where I was stript; and I borrow'd it of one of the drawers to come home in, because I was loth to do penance through the street i' my shirt.

Clem. Well, stand by a while.

Scene V

(*To them* [*enter*] E. Knowell, Wellbred, *and* Bridget.)

Who be these? O, the young company; welcome, welcome! Gi' you joy. Nay, mistress Bridget, blush not; you are not so fresh a bride, but the news of it is come hither afore you. Master bridegroom, I ha' made your peace, give me your hand: so will I for all the rest ere you forsake my roof.

E. Know. We are the more bound to your humanity, sir.

Clem. Only these two have so little of man in 'em, they are no part of my care.

Wel. Yes, sir, let me pray you for this gentleman, he belongs to my sister the bride.

Clem. In what place, sir?

Wel. Of her delight, sir, below the stairs, and in public: her poet, sir.

Clem. A poet! I will challenge him myself presently at extempore,

Mount up thy Phlegon, Muse, and testify
How Saturn, sitting in an ebon cloud,
Disrobed his podex, white as ivory,
And through the welkin thund'red all aloud.

Wel. He is not for extempore, sir: he is all for the pocket muse; please you command a sight of it.

Clem. Yes, yes, search him for a taste of his vein.

[*They search* Mathew's *pockets.*]

Wel. You must not deny the queen's justice, sir, under a writ o' rebellion.

Clem. What! all this verse? Body o' me, he carries a whole realm, a commonwealth of paper in his hose. Let us see some of his subjects. [*Reads.*]

Unto the boundless ocean of thy face,
Runs this poor river, charg'd with streams of eyes.

How! this is stol'n.

E. Know. A parody! a parody! with a kind of miraculous gift, to make it absurder than it was.

Clem. Is all the rest of this batch? Bring me a torch; lay it together, and give fire. Cleanse the air. [*Sets the papers on* *fire.*] Here was enough to have infected the whole city, if it had not been taken in time. See, see, how our poet's glory shines! brighter and brighter! still it increases! O, now it's at the highest; and now it declines as fast. You may see, *sic transit gloria mundi!*

Know. There's an emblem for you, son, and your studies.

Clem. Nay, no speech or act of mine be drawn against such as profess it worthily. They are not born every year, as an alderman. There goes more to the making of a good poet, than a sheriff. Master Kitely, you look upon me! — though I live i' the city here, amongst you, I will do more reverence to him, when I meet him, than I will to the mayor out of his year. But these paper-pedlars! these ink-dabblers! they cannot expect reprehension or reproach; they have it with the fact.

E. Know. Sir, you have sav'd me the labour of a defence.

Clem. It shall be discourse for supper between your father and me, if he dare undertake me. But to dispatch away these: you sign o' the soldier, and picture o' the poet, (but both so false, I will not ha' you hang'd out at my door till midnight,) while we are at supper, you two shall penitently fast it out in my court without; and, if you will, you may pray there that we may be so merry within as to forgive or forget you when we come out. Here's a third, because we tender your safety, shall watch you, he is provided for the purpose. — Look to your charge, sir.

Step. And what shall I do?

Clem. O! I had lost a sheep an he had not bleated: why, sir, you shall give master Downright his cloak; and I will intreat him to take it. A trencher and a napkin you shall have i' the buttery, and keep Cob and his wife company here; whom I will intreat first to be reconcil'd; and you to endeavour with your wit to keep 'em so.

Step. I'll do my best.

Cob. Why, now I see thou art honest, Tib, I receive thee as my dear and mortal wife again.

Tib. And I you, as my loving and obedient husband.

Clem. Good compliment! It will be their bridal night too. They are married anew. Come, I conjure the rest to put off all discontent. You, master Downright, your anger; you, master Knowell, your cares; Master Kitely and his wife, their jealousy.
For, I must tell you both, while that is fed,
Horns i' the mind are worse than o' the head.

Kit. Sir, thus they go from me; kiss me, sweetheart.
See what a drove of horns fly in the air,
Wing'd with my cleansed and my credulous breath!
Watch 'em, suspicious eyes, watch where they fall.
See, see! on heads that think they've none at all!
O, what a plenteous world of this will come!
When air rains horns, all may be sure of some.
I ha' learn'd so much verse out of a jealous man's part in a play.

Clem. 'Tis well, 'tis well! This night we'll dedicate to friendship, love, and laughter. Master bridegroom, take your bride and lead; every one, a fellow. Here is my mistress, Brainworm! to whom all my addresses of courtship shall have their reference: whose adventures this day, when our grandchildren shall hear to be made a fable, I doubt not but it shall find both spectators and applause.

[*Exeunt.*]

A WOMAN KILLED WITH KINDNESS

BY THOMAS HEYWOOD

(1603)

[DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Sir Francis Acton, Brother to Mistress Frankford.
Sir Charles Mountford.
Master John Frankford.
Master Malby, friend to Sir Francis.
Master Wendoll, friend to Frankford.
Master Cranwell.
Master Shafton, false friend to Sir Charles.
Old Mountford, Uncle to Sir Charles.
Master Sandy.
Master Roder.
Master Tidy, Cousin to Sir Charles.
Nicholas, Roger Brick-bat, } Household Servants
Jenkin, Jack Slime, Spigot, Butler, } to Frankford.
Sheriff.
Keeper of Prison.
Sheriff's Officers, Serjeant, Huntsmen, Falconers, Coachmen, Carters, Servants, Musicians.

Mistress Anne Frankford.
Susan, Sister to Sir Charles Mountford.
Cicely, Maid to Mistress Frankford.
Women Servants in Master Frankford's household.]

PROLOGUE

I come but like a harbinger, being sent
To tell you what these preparations mean.
Look for no glorious state; our Muse is bent
Upon a barren subject, a bare scene.
We could afford this twig a timber-tree,
Whose strength might boldly on your favours build;
Our russet, tissue; drone, a honey-bee;
Our barren plot, a large and spacious field;
Our coarse fare, banquets; our thin water, wine;
Our brook, a sea; our bat's eyes, eagle's sight;
Our poet's dull and earthy Muse, divine;
Our ravens, doves; our crow's black feathers, white.
But gentle thoughts, when they may give the foil,
Save them that yield, and spare where they may spoil.

A WOMAN KILLED WITH KINDNESS

[ACT I.]

[Scene I.]

(*Enter* Master John Frankford, Mistress [Frankford], Sir Francis Acton, Sir Charles Mountford, Master Malby, Master Wendoll, and Master Cranwell.)

Sir F. Some music, there! None lead the bride a dance?
Sir C. Yes, would she dance *The Shaking of the Sheets;*
But that's the dance her husband means to lead her.
Wen. That's not the dance that every man must dance,
According to the ballad.
Sir F. Music, ho!
By your leave, sister, — by your husband's leave,
I should have said, — the hand that but this day
Was given you in the church I'll borrow. — Sound!
This marriage music hoists me from the ground.
Frank. Ay, you may caper; you are light and free!
Marriage hath yok'd my heels; pray, then, pardon me.
Sir F. I'll have you dance too, brother!
Sir C. Master Frankford,
You are a happy man, sir, and much joy
Succeed your marriage mirth: you have a wife
So qualified, and with such ornaments
Both of the mind and body. First, her birth
Is noble, and her education such
As might become the daughter of a prince;
Her own tongue speaks all tongues, and her own hand
Can teach all strings to speak in their best grace,
From the shrill'st treble to the hoarsest base.
To end her many praises in one word,
She's Beauty and Perfection's eldest daughter,
Only found by yours, though many a heart hath sought her.
Frank. But that I know your virtues and chaste thoughts,
I should be jealous of your praise, Sir Charles.
Cran. He speaks no more than you approve.
Mal. Nor flatters he that gives to her her due.
Mrs. F. I would your praise could find a fitter theme
Than my imperfect beauties to speak on!
Such as they be, if they my husband please,
They suffice me now I am marriẻd.
His sweet content is like a flattering glass,
To make my face seem fairer to mine eye;
But the least wrinkle from his stormy brow
Will blast the roses in my cheeks that grow.
Sir F. A perfect wife already, meek and patient!
How strangely the word husband fits your mouth,
Not married three hours since! Sister, 'tis good;
You that begin betimes thus must needs prove
Pliant and duteous in your husband's love. —
Gramercies, brother! Wrought her to't already, —
'Sweet husband,' and a curtsey, the first day?
Mark this, mark this, you that are bachelors,
And never took the grace of honest man;
Mark this, against you marry, this one phrase:

In a good time that man both wins and woos
That takes his wife down in her wedding shoes.
Frank. Your sister takes not after you, Sir Francis,
All his wild blood your father spent on you;
He got her in his age, when he grew civil.
All his mad tricks were to his land entail'd,
And you are heir to all; your sister, she
Hath to her dower her mother's modesty.
Sir C. Lord, sir, in what a happy state live you!
This morning, which to many seems a burden,
Too heavy to bear, is unto you a pleasure.
This lady is no clog, as many are;
She doth become you like a well-made suit,
In which the tailor hath us'd all his art;
Not like a thick coat of unseason'd frieze,
Forc'd on your back in summer. She's no chain
To tie your neck, and curb you to the yoke;
But she's a chain of gold to adorn your neck.
You both adorn each other, and your hands,
Methinks, are matches. There's equality
In this fair combination; you are both
Scholars, both young, both being descended nobly.
There's music in this sympathy; it carries
Consort and expectation of much joy,
Which God bestow on you from this first day
Until your dissolution, — that's for aye!
Sir F. We keep you here too long, good brother Frankford.
Into the hall; away! Go cheer your guests.
What! Bride and bridegroom both withdrawn at once?
If you be mist, the guests will doubt their welcome,
And charge you with unkindness.
Frank. To prevent it,
I'll leave you here, to see the dance within.
Mrs. F. And so will I.
(*Exeunt* [Master and Mistress Frankford].)
Sir F. To part you it were sin. —
Now, gallants, while the town musicians
Finger their frets within, and the mad lads
And country lasses, every mother's child,
With nosegays and bride-laces in their hats,
Dance all their country measures, rounds, and jigs,
What shall we do? Hark! They're all on the hoigh;
They toil like mill-horses, and turn as round, —
Marry, not on the toe! Ay, and they caper,
[Not] without cutting; you shall see, to-morrow,
The hall-floor peckt and dinted like a mill-stone,
Made with their high shoes. Though their skill be small,
Yet they tread heavy where their hobnails fall.
Sir C. Well, leave them to their sports! — Sir Francis Acton,
I'll make a match with you! Meet me to-morrow
At Chevy Chase; I'll fly my hawk with yours.
Sir F. For what? For what?
Sir C. Why, for a hundred pound.
Sir F. Pawn me some gold of that!
Sir C. Here are ten angels;
I'll make them good a hundred pound to-morrow
Upon my hawk's wing.
Sir F. 'Tis a match; 'tis done.
Another hundred pound upon your dogs; —
Dare ye, Sir Charles?
Sir C. I dare; were I sure to lose,
I durst do more than that; here is my hand,
The first course for a hundred pound!
Sir F. A match.
Wen. Ten angels on Sir Francis Acton's hawk;
As much upon his dogs!
Cran. I'm for Sir Charles Mountford: I have seen
His hawk and dog both tried. What! Clap ye hands,
Or is't no bargain?
Wen. Yes, and stake them down.
Were they five hundred, they were all my own.
Sir F. Be stirring early with the lark to-morrow;
I'll rise into my saddle ere the sun

Rise from his bed.
Sir C. If there you miss me, say
I am no gentleman! I'll hold my day.
Sir F. It holds on all sides. — Come, to-night let's dance;
Early to-morrow let's prepare to ride:
We'd need be three hours up before the bride. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Nicholas *and* Jenkin, Jack Slime, Roger Brickbat, *with Country Wenches, and two or three Musicians.*)

Jen. Come, Nick, take you Joan Miniver, to trace withal; Jack Slime, traverse you with Cicely Milkpail; I will take Jane Trubkin, and Roger Brickbat shall have Isabel Motley. And now that they are busy in the parlour, come, strike up; we'll have a crash here in the yard.

Nich. My humour is not compendious: dancing I possess not, though I can foot it; yet, since I am fallen into the hands of Cicely Milkpail, I consent.

Slime. Truly, Nick, though we were never brought up like serving courtiers, yet we have been brought up with serving creatures, — ay, and God's creatures, too; for we have been brought up to serve sheep, oxen, horses, hogs, and such like; and, though we be but country fellows, it may be in the way of dancing we can do the horse-trick as well as the serving-men.

Brick. Ay, and the cross-point too.

Jen. O Slime! O Brickbat! Do not you know that comparisons are odious? Now we are odious ourselves, too; therefore there are no comparisons to be made betwixt us.

Nich. I am sudden, and not superfluous;
I am quarrelsome, and not seditious;
I am peaceable, and not contentious;
I am brief, and not compendious.

Slime. Foot it quickly! If the music overcome not my melancholy, I shall quarrel; and if they suddenly do not strike up, I shall presently strike thee down.

Jen. No quarrelling, for God's sake! Truly, if you do, I shall set a knave between ye.

Slime. I come to dance, not to quarrel. Come, what shall it be? *Rogero?*

Jen. *Rogero?* No; we will dance *The Beginning of the World.*

Cicely. I love no dance so well as *John come kiss me now.*

Nich. I that have ere now deserv'd a cushion, call for the *Cushion-dance.*

Brick. For my part, I like nothing so well as *Tom Tyler.*

Jen. No; we'll have *The Hunting of the Fox.*

Slime. *The Hay, The Hay!* There's nothing like *The Hay.*

Nich. I have said, I do say, and I will say again——

Jen. Every man agree to have it as Nick says!

All. Content.

Nich. It hath been, it now is, and it shall be ——

Cicely. What, Master Nicholas? What?

Nich. *Put on your Smock a' Monday.*

Jen. So the dance will come cleanly off! Come, for God's sake, agree of something: if you like not that, put it to the musicians; or let me speak for all, and we'll have *Sellenger's Round.*

All. That, that, that!

Nich. No, I am resolv'd thus it shall be;
First take hands, then take ye to your heels.

Jen. Why, would you have us run away?

Nich. No; but I would have you shake your heels. — Music, strike up!

(*They dance;* Nick *dancing, speaks stately and scurvily, the rest after the country fashion.*)

Jen. Hey! Lively, my lasses! Here's a turn for thee! (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene III.]

(*Wind horns. Enter* Sir Charles Mountford, Sir Francis Acton, Malby, Cranwell, Wendoll, *Falconer, and Huntsmen.*)

Sir C. So; well cast off! Aloft, aloft! Well flown!
Oh, now she takes her at the souse, and strikes her
Down to the earth, like a swift thunder-clap.

Wen. She hath struck ten angels out of my way.
Sir F. A hundred pound from me.
Sir C. What, falconer!
Falc. At hand, sir!
Sir C. Now she hath seiz'd the fowl and 'gins to plume her,
Rebeck her not; rather stand still and check her!
So, seize her gets, her jesses, and her bells!
Away!
Sir F. My hawk kill'd, too.
Sir C. Ay, but 'twas at the querre,
Not at the mount like mine.
Sir F. Judgment, my masters!
Cran. Yours mist her at the ferre.
Wen. Ay, but our merlin first had plum'd the fowl,
And twice renew'd her from the river too.
Her bells, Sir Francis, had not both one weight,
Nor was one semi-tune above the other.
Methinks, these Milan bells do sound too full,
And spoil the mounting of your hawk,
Sir C. 'Tis lost.
Sir F. I grant it not. Mine likewise seiz'd a fowl
Within her talons, and you saw her paws
Full of the feathers; both her petty singles
And her long singles grip'd her more than other;
The terrials of her legs were stain'd with blood,
Not of the fowl only; she did discomfit
Some of her feathers; but she brake away.
Come, come; your hawk is but a rifler.
Sir C. How!
Sir F. Ay, and your dogs are trindle-tails and curs.
Sir C. You stir my blood.
You keep not one good hound in all your kennel,
Nor one good hawk upon your perch.
Sir F. How, knight!
Sir C. So, knight. You will not swagger, sir?
Sir F. Why, say I did?
Sir C. Why, sir,
I say you would gain as much by swagg'ring
As you have got by wagers on your dogs.
You will come short in all things.
Sir F. Not in this!
Now I'll strike home. [*Strikes* Sir Charles]
Sir C. Thou shalt to thy long home,
Or I will want my will.
Sir F. All they that love Sir Francis, follow me!
Sir C. All that affect Sir Charles, draw on my part!
Cran. On this side heaves my hand.
Wen. Here goes my heart.

(*They divide themselves.* Sir Charles Mountford, Cranwell, *Falconer, and Huntsman, fight against* Sir Francis Acton, Wendoll, *his Falconer, and Huntsman; and* Sir Charles *hath the better, and beats them away, killing both of* Sir Francis's *men.* [*Exeunt all but* Sir Charles Mountford].)

Sir C. My God, what have I done! What have I done!
My rage hath plung'd into a sea of blood,
In which my soul lies drown'd. Poor innocents,
For whom we are to answer! Well, 'tis done,
And I remain the victor. A great conquest,
When I would give this right hand, nay, this head,
To breathe in them new life whom I have slain! —
Forgive me, God! 'Twas in the heat of blood,
And anger quite removes me from myself.
It was not I, but rage, did this vile murder;
Yet I, and not my rage, must answer it.
Sir Francis Acton, he is fled the field;
With him all those that did partake his quarrel;
And I am left alone with sorrow dumb,
And in my height of conquest overcome.

(*Enter* Susan.)

Susan. O God! My brother wounded 'mong the dead!
Unhappy jest, that in such earnest ends!
The rumour of this fear stretcht to my ears,
And I am come to know if you be wounded.

Sir C. Oh, sister, sister! Wounded at the heart.
Susan. My God forbid!
Sir C. In doing that thing which he forbad,
I am wounded, sister.
Susan. I hope, not at the heart.
Sir C. Yes, at the heart.
Susan. O God! A surgeon, there.
Sir C. Call me a surgeon, sister, for my soul!
The sin of murder, it hath pierc'd my heart
And made a wide wound there; but for these scratches,
They are nothing, nothing.
Susan. Charles, what have you done?
Sir Francis hath great friends, and will pursue you
Unto the utmost danger of the law.
Sir C. My conscience is become mine enemy,
And will pursue me more than Acton can.
Susan. Oh! Fly, sweet brother!
Sir C. Shall I fly from thee?
Why, Sue, art weary of my company?
Susan. Fly from your foe!
Sir C. You, sister, are my friend,
And flying you, I shall pursue my end.
Susan. Your company is as my eyeball dear;
Being far from you, no comfort can be near.
Yet fly to save your life! What would I care
To spend my future age in black despair,
So you were safe? And yet to live one week
Without my brother Charles, through every cheek
My streaming tears would downwards run so rank,
Till they could set on either side a bank,
And in the midst a channel; so my face
For two salt-water brooks shall still find place.
Sir C. Thou shalt not weep so much; for I will stay,
In spite of danger's teeth. I'll live with thee,
Or I'll not live at all. I will not sell
My country and my father's patrimony,
Nor thy sweet sight, for a vain hope of life.

(*Enter Sheriff, with Officers.*)

Sher. Sir Charles, I am made the unwilling instrument
Of your attach and apprehension.
I'm sorry that the blood of innocent men
Should be of you exacted. It was told me
That you were guarded with a troop of friends,
And therefore I come thus arm'd.
Sir C. Oh, Master Sheriff!
I came into the field with many friends,
But see, they all have left me; only one
Clings to my sad misfortune, my dear sister.
I know you for an honest gentleman;
I yield my weapons, and submit to you.
Convey me where you please!
Sher. To prison, then,
To answer for the lives of these dead men.
Susan. O God! O God!
Sir C. Sweet sister, every strain
Of sorrow from your heart augments my pain;
Your grief abounds, and hits against my breast.
Sher. Sir, will you go?
Sir C. Even where it likes you best.
[*Exeunt.*]

[ACT II.]

[Scene I.]

(*Enter* Master Frankford *in a study.*)

Frank. How happy am I amongst other men,
That in my mean estate embrace content!
I am a gentleman, and by my birth
Companion with a king; a king's no more.
I am possess'd of many fair revenues,
Sufficient to maintain a gentleman;
Touching my mind, I am studied in all arts;
The riches of my thoughts and of my time
Have been a good proficient; but, the chief
Of all the sweet felicities on earth,
I have a fair, a chaste, and loving wife, —
Perfection all, all truth, all ornament.
If man on earth may truly happy be,
Of these at once possest, sure, I am he.

(*Enter* NICHOLAS.)

NICH. Sir, there's a gentleman attends without
To speak with you.
FRANK. On horseback?
NICH. Yes, on horseback.
FRANK. Entreat him to alight, I will attend him.
Know'st thou him, Nick?
NICH. Know him? Yes; his name's Wendoll.
It seems, he comes in haste: his horse is booted
Up to the flank in mire, himself all spotted
And stain'd with plashing. Sure, he rid in fear,
Or for a wager. Horse and man both sweat;
I ne'er saw two in such a smoking heat.
FRANK. Entreat him in: about it instantly! [*Exit* NICHOLAS.]
This Wendoll I have noted, and his carriage
Hath pleas'd me much; by observation
I have noted many good deserts in him.
He's affable, and seen in many things;
Discourses well; a good companion;
And though of small means, yet a gentleman
Of a good house, though somewhat prest by want.
I have preferr'd him to a second place
In my opinion and my best regard.

(*Enter* WENDOLL, MISTRESS FRANKFORD, *and* NICHOLAS.)

MRS. F. Oh, Master Frankford! Master Wendoll here
Brings you the strangest news that e'er you heard.
FRANK. What news, sweet wife? What news, good Master Wendoll?
WEN. You knew the match made 'twixt Sir Francis Acton
And Sir Charles Mountford?
FRANK. True; with their hounds and hawks.
WEN. The matches were both play'd.
FRANK. Ha? And which won?
WEN. Sir Francis, your wife's brother, had the worst,
And lost the wager.
FRANK. Why, the worse his chance;
Perhaps the fortune of some other day
Will change his luck.
MRS. F. Oh, but you hear not all.
Sir Francis lost, and yet was loth to yield.
At length the two knights grew to difference,
From words to blows, and so to banding sides;
Where valorous Sir Charles slew, in his spleen,
Two of your brother's men, — his falconer,
And his good huntsman, whom he lov'd so well.
More men were wounded, no more slain outright.
FRANK. Now, trust me, I am sorry for the knight.
But is my brother safe?
WEN. All whole and sound,
His body not being blemish'd with one wound.
But poor Sir Charles is to the prison led,
To answer at th' assize for them that's dead.
FRANK. I thank your pains, sir. Had the news been better,
Your will was to have brought it, Master Wendoll.
Sir Charles will find hard friends; his case is heinous
And will be most severely censur'd on.
I'm sorry for him. Sir, a word with you!
I know you, sir, to be a gentleman
In all things; your possibilities but mean:
Please you to use my table and my purse;
They're yours.
WEN. O Lord, sir! I shall ne'er deserve it.
FRANK. O sir, disparage not your worth too much:
You are full of quality and fair desert.
Choose of my men which shall attend on you,
And he is yours. I will allow you, sir,
Your man, your gelding, and your table, all
At my own charge; be my companion!
WEN. Master Frankford, I have oft been bound to you
By many favours; this exceeds them all,
That I shall never merit your least favour;
But when your last remembrance I forget,
Heaven at my soul exact that weighty debt!

Frank. There needs no protestation; for I know you
Virtuous, and therefore grateful. — Prithee, Nan,
Use him with all thy loving'st courtesy!

Mrs. F. As far as modesty may well extend,
It is my duty to receive your friend.

Frank. To dinner! Come, sir, from this present day,
Welcome to me for ever! Come, away!

(*Exeunt* [Frankford, Mistress Frankford, *and* Wendoll].)

Nich. I do not like this fellow by no means:
I never see him but my heart still yearns.
Zounds! I could fight with him, yet know not why;
The devil and he are all one in mine eye.

(*Enter* Jenkin.)

Jen. O Nick! What gentleman is that comes to lie at our house? My master allows him one to wait on him, and I believe it will fall to thy lot.

Nich. I love my master; by these hilts, I do;
But rather than I'll ever come to serve him,
I'll turn away my master.

(*Enter* Cicely.)

Cic. Nich'las! where are you, Nich'las? You must come in, Nich'las, and help the young gentleman off with his boots.

Nich. If I pluck off his boots, I'll eat the spurs,
And they shall stick fast in my throat like burrs.

Cic. Then, Jenkin, come you!

Jen. Nay, 'tis no boot for me to deny it. My master hath given me a coat here, but he takes pains himself to brush it once or twice a day with a holly wand.

Cic. Come, come, make haste, that you may wash your hands again, and help to serve in dinner!

Jen. You may see, my masters, though it be afternoon with you, 'tis yet but early days with us, for we have not din'd yet. Stay but a little; I'll but go in and help to bear up the first course, and come to you again presently. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Malby *and* Cranwell.)

Mal. This is the sessions-day; pray can you tell me
How young Sir Charles hath sped? Is he acquit,
Or must he try the laws' strict penalty?

Cran. He's clear'd of all, spite of his enemies,
Whose earnest labour was to take his life.
But in this suit of pardon he hath spent
All the revenues that his father left him;
And he is now turn'd a plain countryman,
Reform'd in all things. See, sir, here he comes.

(*Enter* Sir Charles *and his* Keeper.)

Keep. Discharge your fees, and you are then at freedom.

Sir C. Here, Master Keeper, take the poor remainder
Of all the wealth I have! My heavy foes
Have made my purse light; but, alas! to me
'Tis wealth enough that you have set me free.

Mal. God give you joy of your delivery!
I am glad to see you abroad, Sir Charles.

Sir C. The poorest knight in England, Master Malby.
My life has cost me all my patrimony
My father left his son. Well, God forgive them
That are the authors of my penury!

(*Enter* Shafton.)

Shaft. Sir, Charles! A hand, a hand! At liberty?
Now, by the faith I owe, I am glad to see it.
What want you? Wherein may I pleasure you?

Sir C. Oh me! Oh, most unhappy gentleman!
I am not worthy to have friends stirr'd up,
Whose hands may help me in this plunge of want.
I would I were in Heaven, to inherit there
Th' immortal birthright which my Saviour keeps,
And by no unthrift can be bought and sold;

For here on earth what pleasures should we trust!
Shaft. To rid you from these contemplations,
Three hundred pounds you shall receive of me;
Nay, five for fail. Come, sir, the sight of gold
Is the most sweet receipt for melancholy,
And will revive your spirits. You shall hold law
With your proud adversaries. Tush! let Frank Acton
Wage, with his knighthood, like expense with me,
And he will sink, he will. — Nay, good Sir Charles,
Applaud your fortune and your fair escape
From all these perils.
Sir C. Oh, sir! they have undone me.
Two thousand and five hundred pound a year
My father at his death possest me of;
All which the envious Acton made me spend;
And, notwithstanding all this large expense,
I had much ado to gain my liberty;
And I have only now a house of pleasure,
With some five hundred pounds reserv'd,
Both to maintain me and my loving sister.
Shaft. [*aside*]. That must I have, it lies convenient for me.
If I can fasten but one finger on him,
With my full hand I'll gripe him to the heart.
'Tis not for love, I proffer'd him this coin,
But for my gain and pleasure. — Come, Sir Charles,
I know you have need of money; take my offer.
Sir C. Sir, I accept it, and remain indebted
Even to the best of my unable power.
Come, gentlemen, and see it tend'red down! [*Exeunt.*]

[Scene III.]

(*Enter* Wendoll, *melancholy.*)

Wen. I am a villain, if I apprehend
But such a thought! Then, to attempt the deed,
Slave, thou art damn'd without redemption. —
I'll drive away this passion with a song.
A song! Ha ha! A song! As if, fond man,
Thy eyes could swim in laughter, when thy soul
Lies drench'd and drowned in red tears of blood!
I'll pray, and see if God within my heart
Plant better thoughts. Why, prayers are meditations,
And when I meditate (oh, God forgive me!)
It is on her divine perfections.
I will forget her; I will arm myself
Not t' entertain a thought of love to her;
And, when I come by chance into her presence,
I'll hale these balls until my eye-strings crack
From being pull'd and drawn to look that way.

(*Enter, over the Stage,* Frankford, *his wife, and* Nicholas [*and exit*].)

O God, O God! With what a violence
I'm hurried to mine own destruction!
There goest thou, the most perfectest man
That ever England bred a gentleman,
And shall I wrong his bed? — Thou God of thunder!
Stay, in Thy thoughts of vengeance and of wrath,
Thy great, almighty, and all-judging hand
From speedy execution on a villain, —
A villain and a traitor to his friend.

(*Enter* Jenkin.)

Jen. Did your worship call?
Wen. He doth maintain me; he allows me largely
Money to spend.
Jen. By my faith, so do not you me: I cannot get a cross of you.
Wen. My gelding, and my man.
Jen. That's Sorrel and I.
Wen. This kindness grows of no alliance 'twixt us.
Jen. Nor is my service of any great acquaintance.
Wen. I never bound him to me by desert.
Of a mere stranger, a poor gentleman,

A man by whom in no kind he could gain,
He hath plac'd me in the height of all his thoughts,
Made me companion with the best and chiefest
In Yorkshire. He cannot eat without me,
Nor laugh without me; I am to his body
As necessary as his digestion,
And equally do make him whole or sick.
And shall I wrong this man? Base man! Ingrate!
Hast thou the power, straight with thy gory hands,
To rip thy image from his bleeding heart,
To scratch thy name from out the holy book
Of his remembrance, and to wound his name
That holds thy name so dear? Or rend his heart
To whom thy heart was knit and join'd together? —
And yet I must. Then Wendoll, be content!
Thus villains, when they would, cannot repent.

JEN. What a strange humour is my new master in! Pray God he be not mad; if he should be so, I should never have any mind to serve him in Bedlam. It may be he's mad for missing of me.

WEN. What, Jenkin! Where's your mistress?

JEN. Is your worship married?

WEN. Why dost thou ask?

JEN. Because you are my master; and if I have a mistress, I would be glad, like a good servant, to do my duty to her.

WEN. I mean Mistress Frankford.

JEN. Marry, sir, her husband is riding out of town, and she went very lovingly to bring him on his way to horse. Do you see, sir? Here she comes, and here I go.

WEN. Vanish! [*Exit* JENKIN.]

(*Enter* MISTRESS FRANKFORD.)

MRS. F. You are well met, sir; now, in troth, my husband
Before he took horse, had a great desire
To speak with you; we sought about the house,
Halloo'd into the fields, sent every way,
But could not meet you. Therefore, he enjoin'd me
To do unto you his most kind commends,—
Nay, more: he wills you, as you prize his love,
Or hold in estimation his kind friendship,
To make bold in his absence, and command
Even as himself were present in the house;
For you must keep his table, use his servants,
And be a present Frankford in his absence.

WEN. I thank him for his love. —
[*Aside.*] Give me a name, you, whose infectious tongues
Are tipt with gall and poison: as you would
Think on a man that had your father slain,
Murd'red your children, made your wives base strumpets,
So call me, call me so; print in my face
The most stigmatic title of a villain,
For hatching treason to so true a friend!

MRS. F. Sir, you are much beholding to my husband;
You are a man most dear in his regard.

WEN. I am bound unto your husband, and you too.
[*Aside.*] I will not speak to wrong a gentleman
Of that good estimation, my kind friend.
I will not; zounds! I will not. I may choose,
And I will choose. Shall I be so misled,
Or shall I purchase to my father's crest
The motto of a villain? If I say
I will not do it, what thing can enforce me?
What can compel me? What sad destiny
Hath such command upon my yielding thoughts!
I will not; — ha! Some fury pricks me on;
The swift fates drag me at their chariot wheel,
And hurry me to mischief. Speak I must:
Injure myself, wrong her, deceive his trust!

MRS. F. Are you not well, sir, that you seem thus troubled?
There is sedition in your countenance.

WEN. And in my heart, fair angel, chaste and wise.
I love you! Start not, speak not, answer not;
I love you, — nay, let me speak the rest;
Bid me to swear, and I will call to record

The host of Heaven.
Mrs. F. The host of Heaven forbid
Wendoll should hatch such a disloyal thought?
Wen. Such is my fate; to this suit was I born,
To wear rich pleasure's crown, or fortune's scorn.
Mrs. F. My husband loves you.
Wen. I know it.
Mrs. F. He esteems you,
Even as his brain, his eye-ball, or his heart.
Wen. I have tried it.
Mrs. F. His purse is your exchequer, and his table
Doth freely serve you.
Wen. So I have found it.
Mrs. F. Oh! With what face of brass, what brow of steel,
Can you, unblushing, speak this to the face
Of the espous'd wife of so dear a friend?
It is my husband that maintains your state. —
Will you dishonour him that in your power
Hath left his whole affairs? I am his wife,
It is to me you speak.
Wen. O speak no more;
For more than this I know, and have recorded
Within the red-leav'd table of my heart.
Fair, and of all belov'd, I was not fearful
Bluntly to give my life into your hand,
And at one hazard all my earthly means.
Go, tell your husband; he will turn me off,
And I am then undone. I care not, I;
'Twas for your sake. Perchance, in rage he'll kill me;
I care not, 'twas for you. Say I incur
The general name of villain through the world,
Of traitor to my friend; I care not, I.
Beggary, shame, death, scandal, and reproach, —
For you I'll hazard all. Why, what care I?
For you I'll live, and in your love I'll die.
Mrs. F. You move me, sir, to passion and to pity.
The love I bear my husband is as precious
As my soul's health.
Wen. I love your husband too,
And for his love I will engage my life.
Mistake me not; the augmentation
Of my sincere affection borne to you
Doth no whit lessen my regard to him.
I will be secret, lady, close as night;
And not the light of one small glorious star
Shall shine here in my forehead, to bewray
That act of night.
Mrs. F. What shall I say?
My soul is wandering, hath lost her way.
Oh, Master Wendoll! Oh!
Wen. Sigh not, sweet saint;
For every sigh you breathe draws from my heart
A drop of blood.
Mrs. F. I ne'er offended yet:
My fault, I fear, will in my brow be writ.
Women that fall, not quite bereft of grace,
Have their offences noted in their face.
I blush, and am asham'd. Oh, Master Wendoll,
Pray God I be not born to curse your tongue,
That hath enchanted me! This maze I am in
I fear will prove the labyrinth of sin.

(*Enter* Nicholas [*behind*].)

Wen. The path of pleasure and the gate to bliss,
Which on your lips I knock at with a kiss!
Nich. I'll kill the rogue.
Wen. Your husband is from home, your bed's no blab.
Nay, look not down and blush!
[*Exeunt* Wendoll *and* Mistress Frankford.]
Nich. Zounds! I'll stab.
Ay, Nick, was it thy chance to come just in the nick?
I love my master, and I hate that slave;
I love my mistress, but these tricks I like not.
My master shall not pocket up this wrong;
I'll eat my fingers first. What say'st thou, metal?
Does not that rascal Wendoll go on legs
That thou must cut off? Hath he not hamstrings
That thou must hough? Nay, metal, thou shalt stand
To all I say. I'll henceforth turn a spy,
And watch them in their close conveyances.
I never look'd for better of that rascal,

Since he came miching first into our house.
It is that Satan hath corrupted her;
For she was fair and chaste. I'll have an eye
In all their gestures. Thus I think of them:
If they proceed as they have done before,
Wendoll's a knave, my mistress is a —
(*Exit.*)

[ACT III.]

[Scene I.]

(*Enter* Sir Charles Mountford *and* Susan.)

Sir C. Sister, you see we are driven to hard shift,
To keep this poor house we have left unsold.
I'm now enforc'd to follow husbandry,
And you to milk; and do we not live well?
Well, I thank God.
Susan. Oh, brother! here's a change,
Since old Sir Charles died in our father's house.
Sir C. All things on earth thus change, some up, some down;
Content's a kingdom, and I wear that crown.

(*Enter* Shafton, *with a Sergeant.*)

Shaft. Good morrow, morrow, Sir Charles! What! With your sister,
Plying your husbandry? — Sergeant, stand off! —
You have a pretty house here, and a garden,
And goodly ground about it. Since it lies
So near a lordship that I lately bought,
I would fain buy it of you. I will give you —
Sir C. Oh, pardon me; this house successively
Hath long'd to me and my progenitors
Three hundred years. My great-great-grandfather,
He in whom first our gentle style began,
Dwelt here, and in this ground increast this mole-hill
Unto that mountain which my father left me.
Where he the first of all our house began,
I now the last will end, and keep this house, —
This virgin title, never yet deflower'd
By any unthrift of the Mountfords' line.
In brief, I will not sell it for more gold
Than you could hide or pave the ground withal.
Shaft. Ha, ha! a proud mind and a beggar's purse!
Where's my three hundred pounds, besides the use?
I have brought it to an execution
By course of law. What! Is my money ready?
Sir C. An execution, sir, and never tell me
You put my bond in suit? You deal extremely.
Shaft. Sell me the land, and I'll acquit you straight.
Sir C. Alas, alas! 'Tis all trouble hath left me
To cherish me and my poor sister's life.
If this were sold, our names should then be quite
Raz'd from the bead-roll of gentility.
You see what hard shift we have made to keep it
Allied still to our name. This palm you see,
Labour hath glow'd within; her silver brow,
That never tasted a rough winter's blast
Without a mask or fan, doth with a grace
Defy cold winter, and his storms outface.
Susan. Sir, we feed sparing, and we labour hard,
We lie uneasy, to reserve to us
And our succession this small spot of ground.
Sir C. I have so bent my thoughts to husbandry,
That I protest I scarcely can remember
What a new fashion is; how silk or satin
Feels in my hand. Why, pride is grown to us
A mere, mere stranger. I have quite forgot
The names of all that ever waited on me.
I cannot name ye any of my hounds,
Once from whose echoing mouths I heard all music
That e'er my heart desir'd. What should I say?
To keep this place, I have chang'd myself away.
Shaft. Arrest him at my suit! — Actions and actions

Shall keep thee in perpetual bondage fast;
Nay, more, I'll sue thee by a late appeal,
And call thy former life in question.
The keeper is my friend; thou shalt have irons,
And usage such as I'll deny to dogs. —
Away with him!
SIR C. You are too timorous.
But trouble is my master,
And I will serve him truly. — My kind sister,
Thy tears are of no use to mollify
The flinty man. Go to my father's brother,
My kinsmen, and allies; entreat them for me,
To ransom me from this injurious man
That seeks my ruin.
SHAFT. Come, irons! Come away;
I'll see thee lodg'd far from the sight of day. (*Exeunt* [*except* SUSAN].)
SUSAN. My heart's so hard'ned with the frost of grief,
Death cannot pierce it through. — Tyrant too fell!
So lead the fiends condemned souls to hell.

(*Enter* SIR FRANCIS ACTON *and* MALBY.)

SIR F. Again to prison! Malby, hast thou seen
A poor slave better tortur'd? Shall we hear
The music of his voice cry from the grate,
Meat, for the Lord's sake? No, no; yet I am not
Throughly reveng'd. They say, he hath a pretty wench
Unto his sister; shall I, in mercy-sake
To him and to his kindred, bribe the fool
To shame herself by lewd, dishonest lust?
I'll proffer largely; but, the deed being done
I'll smile to see her base confusion.
MAL. Methinks, Sir Francis, you are full reveng'd
For greater wrongs than he can proffer you.
See where the poor sad gentlewoman stands!
SIR F. Ha, ha! Now will I flout her poverty,
Deride her fortunes, scoff her base estate;
My very soul the name of Mountford hates.
But stay, my heart! Oh, what a look did fly
To strike my soul through with thy piercing eye!
I am enchanted; all my spirits are fled.
And with one glance my envious spleen struck dead.
SUSAN. Acton! That seeks our blood! (*Runs away.*)
SIR F. O chaste and fair!
MAL. Sir Francis! Why, Sir Francis! Zounds, in a trance?
Sir Francis! What cheer, man? Come, come, how is't?
SIR F. Was she not fair? Or else this judging eye
Cannot distinguish beauty.
MAL. She was fair.
SIR F. She was an angel in a mortal's shape,
And ne'er descended from old Mountford's line.
But soft, soft, let me call my wits together!
A poor, poor wench, to my great adversary
Sister, whose very souls denounce stern war
One against other! How now, Frank, turn'd fool
Or madman, whether? But no! Master of
My perfect senses and directest wits.
Then why should I be in this violent humour
Of passion and of love? And with a person
So different every way, and so oppos'd
In all contractions and still-warring actions?
Fie, fie! How I dispute against my soul!
Come, come; I'll gain her, or in her fair quest
Purchase my soul free and immortal rest. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE II.]

(*Enter three or four Serving-men, one with a voider and a wooden knife, to take away all; another the salt and bread; another with the table-cloth and napkins; another the carpet;* JENKIN *with two lights after them.*)

JEN. So; march in order, and retire in battle array! My master and the guests have supp'd already; all's taken away. Here, now spread for the serving-men in the hall! — Butler, it belongs to your office.

BUT. I know it, Jenkin. What d'ye call the gentleman that supp'd there to-night?

Jen. Who? My master?

But. No, no; Master Wendoll, he's a daily guest. I mean the gentleman that came but this afternoon.

Jen. His name's Master Cranwell. God's light! Hark, within there; my master calls to lay more billets upon the fire. Come, come! Lord, how we that are in office here in the house are troubled! One spread the carpet in the parlour, and stand ready to snuff the lights; the rest be ready to prepare their stomachs! More lights in the hall, there! Come, Nicholas.

(*Exeunt* [*all but* Nicholas].)

Nich. I cannot eat; but had I Wendoll's heart,
I would eat that. The rogue grows impudent,
Oh! I have seen such vile, notorious tricks,
Ready to make my eyes dart from my head.
I'll tell my master; by this air, I will;
Fall what may fall, I'll tell him. Here he comes.

(*Enter* Master Frankford, *as it were brushing the crumbs from his clothes with a napkin, as newly risen from supper.*)

Frank. Nicholas, what make you here? Why are not you
At supper in the hall, among your fellows?

Nich. Master, I stay'd your rising from the board,
To speak with you.

Frank. Be brief then, gentle Nicholas;
My wife and guests attend me in the parlour.
Why dost thou pause? Now, Nicholas, you want money,
And, unthrift-like, would eat into your wages
Ere you had earn'd it. Here, sir, 's half-a-crown;
Play the good husband, — and away to supper!

Nich. By this hand, an honourable gentleman! I will not see him wrong'd.
Sir, I have serv'd you long; you entertain'd me
Seven years before your beard; you knew me, sir,
Before you knew my mistress.

Frank. What of this, good Nicholas?

Nich. I never was a make-bate or a knave;
I have no fault but one — I'm given to quarrel,
But not with women. I will tell you, master,
That which will make your heart leap from your breast,
Your hair to startle from your head, your ears to tingle.

Frank. What preparation's this to dismal news?

Nich. 'Sblood! sir, I love you better than your wife.
I'll make it good.

Frank. You are a knave, and I have much ado
With wonted patience to contain my rage,
And not to break thy pate. Thou art a knave.
I'll turn you, with your base comparisons,
Out of my doors.

Nich. Do, do.
There is not room for Wendoll and me too,
Both in one house. O master, master,
That Wendoll is a villain!

Frank. Ay, saucy?

Nich. Strike, strike, do strike; yet hear me! I am no fool;
I know a villain, when I see him act
Deeds of a villain. Master, master, the base slave
Enjoys my mistress, and dishonours you.

Frank. Thou hast kill'd me with a weapon, whose sharp point
Hath prick'd quite through and through my shiv'ring heart,
Drops of cold sweat sit dangling on my hairs,
Like morning's dew upon the golden flowers,
And I am plung'd into strange agonies.
What did'st thou say? If any word that toucht
His credit, or her reputation,
It is as hard to enter my belief,
As Dives into heaven.

Nich. I can gain nothing:
They are two that never wrong'd me. I knew before
'Twas but a thankless office, and perhaps
As much as is my service, or my life

Is worth. All this I know; but this, and more,
More by a thousand dangers, could not hire me
To smother such a heinous wrong from you.
I saw, and I have said.

Frank. ’Tis probable. Though blunt, yet he is honest.
Though I durst pawn my life, and on their faith
Hazard the dear salvation of my soul,
Yet in my trust I may be too secure.
May this be true? Oh, may it? Can it be?
Is it by any wonder possible?
Man, woman, what thing mortal can we trust,
When friends and bosom wives prove so unjust? —
What instance hast thou of this strange report?

Nich. Eyes, [master,] eyes.

Frank. Thy eyes may be deceiv’d, I tell thee;
For should an angel from the heavens drop down,
And preach this to me that thyself hast told,
He should have much ado to win belief;
In both their loves I am so confident.

Nich. Shall I discourse the same by circumstance?

Frank. No more! To supper, and command your fellows
To attend us and the strangers! Not a word,
I charge thee, on thy life! Be secret then;
For I know nothing.

Nich. I am dumb; and, now that I have eas’d my stomach,
I will go fill my stomach. [*Exit.*]

Frank. Away! Begone! —
She is well born, descended nobly;
Virtuous her education; her repute
Is in the general voice of all the country
Honest and fair; her carriage, her demeanour,
In all her actions that concern the love
To me her husband, modest, chaste, and godly.
Is all this seeming gold plain copper?
But he, that Judas that hath borne my purse,
Hath sold me for a sin. O God! O God!
Shall I put up these wrongs? No! Shall I trust
The bare report of this suspicious groom,
Before the double-gilt, the well-hatch’d ore
Of their two hearts? No, I will lose these thoughts;
Distraction I will banish from my brow,
And from my looks exile sad discontent.
Their wonted favours in my tongue shall flow;
Till I know all, I’ll nothing seem to know. —
Lights and a table there! Wife, Master Wendoll,
And gentle Master Cranwell!

(*Enter* Mistress Frankford, Master Wendoll, Master Cranwell, Nicholas, *and* Jenkin *with cards, carpets, stools, and other necessaries.*)

Frank. O! Master Cranwell, you are a stranger here,
And often balk my house; faith, y’are a churl! —
Now we have supp’d, a table, and to cards!

Jen. A pair of cards, Nicholas, and a carpet to cover the table! Where’s Cicely, with her counters and her box? Candles and candlesticks, there! Fie! We have such a household of serving-creatures! Unless it be Nick and I, there’s not one amongst them all that can say bo to a goose. — Well said, Nick!

(*They spread a carpet; set down lights and cards.*)

Mrs. F. Come, Mr. Frankford, who shall take my part?

Frank. Marry, that will I, sweet wife.

Wen. No, by my faith, when you are together, I sit out. It must be Mistress Frankford and I, or else it is no match.

Frank. I do not like that match.

Nich. [*aside*]. You have no reason, marry, knowing all.

Frank. ’Tis no great matter, neither. — Come, Master Cranwell, shall you and I take them up?

Cran. At your pleasure, sir.

Frank. I must look to you, Master Wendoll, for you’ll be playing false. Nay, so will my wife, too.

Nich. [*aside*]. Ay, I will be sworn she will.

Mrs. F. Let them that are taken playing false, forfeit the set!

Frank. Content; it shall go hard but I'll take you.

Cran. Gentlemen, what shall our game be?

Wen. Master Frankford, you play best at noddy?

Frank. You shall not find it so; indeed, you shall not.

Mrs. F. I can play at nothing so well as double-ruff.

Frank. If Master Wendoll and my wife be together, there's no playing against them at double-hand.

Nich. I can tell you, sir, the game that Master Wendoll is best at.

Wen. What game is that, Nick?

Nich. Marry, sir, knave out of doors.

Wen. She and I will take you at lodam.

Mrs. F. Husband, shall we play at saint?

Frank. [*aside*]. My saint's turn'd devil. — No, we'll none of saint:
You are best at new-cut, wife, you'll play at that.

Wen. If you play at new-cut, I'm soonest hitter of any here, for a wager.

Frank. [*aside*]. 'Tis me they play on. — Well, you may draw out;
For all your cunning, 'twill be to your shame;
I'll teach you, at your new-cut, a new game.
Come, come!

Cran. If you cannot agree upon the game,
To post and pair!

Wen. We shall be soonest pairs; and my good host,
When he comes late home, he must kiss the post.

Frank. Whoever wins, it shall be to thy cost.

Cran. Faith, let it be vide-ruff, and let's make honours!

Frank. If you make honours, one thing let me crave:
Honour the king and queen, except the knave.

Wen. Well, as you please for that. — Lift, who shall deal?

Mrs. F. The least in sight. What are you, Master Wendoll?

Wen. I am a knave.

Nich. [*aside*]. I'll swear it.

Mrs. F. I a queen.

Frank. [*aside*]. A quean, thou should'st say. — Well, the cards are mine:
They are the grossest pair that e'er I felt.

Mrs. F. Shuffle, I'll cut: would I had never dealt!

Frank. I have lost my dealing.

Wen. Sir, the fault's in me;
This queen I have more than mine own, you see.
Give me the stock!

Frank. My mind's not on my game.
Many a deal I've lost; the more's your shame.
You have serv'd me a bad trick, Master Wendoll.

Wen. Sir, you must take your lot. To end this strife,
I know I have dealt better with your wife.

Frank. Thou hast dealt falsely, then.

Mrs. F. What's trumps?

Wen. Hearts. Partner, I rub.

Frank. [*aside*]. Thou robb'st me of my soul, of her chaste love;
In thy false dealing thou hast robb'd my heart. —
Booty you play; I like a loser stand,
Having no heart, or here or in my hand.
I will give o'er the set, I am not well.
Come, who will hold my cards?

Mrs. F. Not well, sweet Master Frankford?
Alas, what ails you? 'Tis some sudden qualm.

Wen. How long have you been so, Master Frankford?

Frank. Sir, I was lusty, and I had my health,
But I grew ill when you began to deal. —
Take hence this table! — Gentle Master Cranwell,
Y'are welcome; see your chamber at your pleasure!
I am sorry that this megrim takes me so,
I cannot sit and bear you company. —

Jenkin, some lights, and show him to his chamber!
Mrs. F. A nightgown for my husband; quickly, there!
It is some rheum or cold.
Wen. Now, in good faith,
This illness you have got by sitting late
Without your gown.
Frank. I know it, Master Wendoll.
Go, go to bed, lest you complain like me! —
Wife, prithee, wife, into my bed-chamber!
The night is raw and cold, and rheumatic.
Leave me my gown and light; I'll walk away my fit.
Wen. Sweet sir, good night!
Frank. Myself, good night!
[*Exit* Wendoll.]
Mrs. F. Shall I attend you, husband?
Frank. No, gentle wife, thou'lt catch cold in thy head.
Prithee, begone, sweet; I'll make haste to bed.
Mrs. F. No sleep will fasten on mine eyes, you know,
Until you come. [*Exit.*]
Frank. Sweet Nan, I prithee, go! —
I have bethought me; get me by degrees
The keys of all my doors, which I will mould
In wax, and take their fair impression,
To have by them new keys. This being compast,
At a set hour a letter shall be brought me,
And when they think they may securely play,
They nearest are to danger. — Nick, I must rely
Upon thy trust and faithful secrecy.
Nich. Build on my faith!
Frank. To bed, then, not to rest!
Care lodges in my brain, grief in my breast. [*Exeunt.*]

[Scene III.]

(*Enter* Sir Charles's *Sister*, Old Mountford, Sandy, Roder, *and* Tidy.)

Old Mount. You say my nephew is in great distress;
Who brought it to him but his own lewd life?
I cannot spare a cross. I must confess,
He was my brother's son; why, niece, what then?
This is no world in which to pity men.
Susan. I was not born a beggar, though his extremes
Enforce this language from me. I protest
No fortune of mine own could lead my tongue
To this base key. I do beseech you, uncle,
For the name's sake, for Christianity, —
Nay, for God's sake, to pity his distress.
He is deni'd the freedom of the prison,
And in the hole is laid with men condemn'd;
Plenty he hath of nothing but of irons,
And it remains in you to free him thence.
Old Mount. Money I cannot spare; men should take heed.
He lost my kindred when he fell to need.
(*Exit.*)
Susan. Gold is but earth; thou earth enough shalt have,
When thou hast once took measure of thy grave.
You know me, Master Sandy, and my suit.
Sandy. I knew you, lady, when the old man liv'd;
I knew you ere your brother sold his land.
Then you were Mistress Sue, trick'd up in jewels;
Then you sung well, play'd sweetly on the lute;
But now I neither know you nor your suit.
[*Exit.*]
Susan. You, Master Roder, was my brother's tenant;
Rent-free he plac'd you in that wealthy farm,
Of which you are possest.
Roder. True, he did;
And have I not there dwelt still for his sake?
I have some business now; but, without doubt,
They that have hurl'd him in, will help him out.
(*Exit.*)
Susan. Cold comfort still. What say you, cousin Tidy?
Tidy. I say this comes of roysting, swagg'ring.
Call me not cousin; each man for himself!

Some men are born to mirth, and some to sorrow:
I am no cousin unto them that borrow.
(*Exit.*)

Susan. O Charity, why art thou fled to heaven,
And left all things [up]on this earth uneven?
Their scoffing answers I will ne'er return,
But to myself his grief in silence mourn.

(*Enter* Sir Francis *and* Malby.)

Sir F. She is poor, I'll therefore tempt her with this gold.
Go, Malby, in my name deliver it,
And I will stay thy answer.

Mal. Fair mistress, as I understand your grief
Doth grow from want, so I have here in store
A means to furnish you, a bag of gold,
Which to your hands I freely tender you.

Susan. I thank you, Heavens! I thank you, gentle sir:
God make me able to requite this favour!

Mal. This gold Sir Francis Acton sends by me,
And prays you ——

Susan. Acton? O God! That name I'm born to curse.
Hence, bawd; hence, broker! See, I spurn his gold.
My honour never shall for gain be sold.

Sir F. Stay, lady, stay!

Susan. From you I'll posting hie,
Even as the doves from feather'd eagles fly.
(*Exit.*)

Sir F. She hates my name, my face; how should I woo?
I am disgrac'd in every thing I do.
The more she hates me, and disdains my love,
The more I am rapt in admiration
Of her divine and chaste perfections.
Woo her with gifts I cannot, for all gifts
Sent in my name she spurns; with looks I cannot,
For she abhors my sight; nor yet with letters,
For none she will receive. How then? how then?
Well, I will fasten such a kindness on her,
As shall o'ercome her hate and conquer it.
Sir Charles, her brother, lies in execution
For a great sum of money; and, besides,
The appeal is sued still for my huntsmen's death,
Which only I have power to reverse.
In her I'll bury all my hate of him. —
Go seek the Keeper, Malby, bring him to me!
To save his body, I his debts will pay;
To save his life, I his appeal will stay.
[*Exeunt.*]

[ACT IV.]

[Scene I.]

(*Enter* Sir Charles [Mountford], *in prison, with irons, his feet bare, his garments all ragged and torn.*)

Sir C. Of all on the earth's face most miserable,
Breathe in this hellish dungeon thy laments!
Thus like a slave ragg'd, like a felon gyv'd, —
That hurls thee headlong to this base estate.
Oh, unkind uncle! Oh, my friends ingrate!
Unthankful kinsmen! Mountford's all too base,
To let thy name be fetter'd in disgrace.
A thousand deaths here in this grave I die;
Fear, hunger, sorrow, cold, all threat my death,
And join together to deprive my breath.
But that which most torments me, my dear sister
Hath left to visit me, and from my friends
Hath brought no hopeful answer; therefore, I
Divine they will not help my misery.
If it be so, shame, scandal, and contempt
Attend their covetous thoughts; need make their graves!
Usurers they live, and may they die like slaves!

(*Enter Keeper.*)

Keep. Knight, be of comfort, for I bring thee freedom
From all thy troubles.

Sir C. Then, I am doom'd to die:
Death is the end of all calamity.

KEEP. Live! Your appeal is stay'd; the execution
Of all your debts discharg'd; your creditors
Even to the utmost penny satisfied.
In sign whereof your shackles I knock off.
You are not left so much indebted to us
As for your fees; all is discharg'd; all paid.
Go freely to your house, or where you please;
After long miseries, embrace your ease.
SIR C. Thou grumblest out the sweetest music to me
That ever organ play'd. — Is this a dream?
Or do my waking senses apprehend
The pleasing taste of these applausive news?
Slave that I was, to wrong such honest friends,
My loving kinsman, and my near allies!
Tongue, I will bite thee for the scandal breath'd
Against such faithful kinsmen; they are all
Compos'd of pity and compassion,
Of melting charity and of moving ruth.
That which I spoke before was in my rage;
They are my friends, the mirrors of this age;
Bounteous and free. The noble Mountford's race
Ne'er bred a covetous thought, or humour base.

(*Enter* SUSAN.)

SUSAN. I cannot longer stay from visiting
My woful brother. While I could, I kept
My hapless tidings from his hopeful ear.
SIR C. Sister, how much am I indebted to thee
And to thy travail!
SUSAN. What, at liberty?
SIR C. Thou seest I am, thanks to thy industry.
Oh! Unto which of all my courteous friends
Am I thus bound? My uncle Mountford, he
Even of an infant lov'd me; was it he?
So did my cousin Tidy; was it he?
So Master Roder, Master Sandy, too.
Which of all these did this high kindness do?
SUSAN. Charles, can you mock me in your poverty,
Knowing your friends deride your misery?
Now, I protest I stand so much amaz'd,
To see your bonds free, and your irons knock'd off,
That I am rapt into a maze of wonder;
The rather for I know not by what means
This happiness hath chanc'd.
SIR C. Why, by my uncle,
My cousins, and my friends; who else, I pray,
Whould take upon them all my debts to pay?
SUSAN. Oh, brother! they are men [made] all of flint,
Pictures of marble, and as void of pity
As chased bears. I begg'd, I sued, I kneel'd,
Laid open all your griefs and miseries,
Which they derided; more than that, deni'd us
A part in their alliance; but, in pride,
Said that our kindred with our plenty died.
SIR C. Drudges too much, — what did they? Oh, known evil!
Rich fly the poor, as good men shun the devil.
Whence should my freedom come? Of whom alive,
Saving of those, have I deserv'd so well?
Guess, sister, call to mind, remember me!
These have I rais'd, they follow the world's guise,
Whom rich [they] honour, they in woe despise.
SUSAN. My wits have lost themselves; let's ask the keeper!
SIR C. Gaoler!
KEEP. At hand, sir,
SIR C. Of courtesy resolve me one demand!
What was he took the burden of my debts
From off my back, staid my appeal to death,
Discharg'd my fees, and brought me liberty?
KEEP. A courteous knight, one call'd Sir Francis Acton.
SIR C. Ha! Acton! Oh me! More distress'd in this
Than all my troubles! Hale me back,
Double my irons, and my sparing meals
Put into halves, and lodge me in a dungeon
More deep, more dark, more cold, more comfortless!

By Acton freed! Not all thy manacles
Could fetter so my heels, as this one word
Hath thrall'd my heart; and it must now lie bound
In more strict prison than thy stony gaol.
I am not free, I go but under bail.

KEEP. My charge is done, sir, now I have my fees.
As we get little, we will nothing leese.

SIR C. By Acton freed, my dangerous opposite!
Why, to what end? On what occasion? Ha!
Let me forget the name of enemy,
And with indifference balance this high favour!
Ha!

SUSAN. [*aside*]. His love to me, upon my soul, 'tis so!
That is the root from whence these strange things grow.

SIR C. Had this proceeded from my father, he
That by the law of Nature is most bound
In offices of love, it had deserv'd
My best employment to requite that grace.
Had it proceeded from my friends, or him,
From them this action had deserv'd my life, —
And from a stranger more, because from such
There is less execution of good deeds.
But he, nor father, nor ally, nor friend,
More than a stranger, both remote in blood,
And in his heart oppos'd my enemy,
That this high bounty should proceed from him, —
Oh! there I lose myself. What should I say,
What think, what do, his bounty to repay?

SUSAN. You wonder, I am sure, whence this strange kindness
Proceeds in Acton; I will tell you, brother.
He dotes on me, and oft hath sent me gifts,
Letters, and tokens; I refus'd them all.

SIR C. I have enough, though poor: my heart is set,
In one rich gift to pay back all my debt.
(*Exeunt.*)

[SCENE II.]

(*Enter* FRANKFORD *and* NICHOLAS, *with keys and a letter in his hand.*)

FRANK. This is the night that I must play my part,
To try two seeming angels. — Where's my keys?

NICH. They are made according to your mould in wax.
I bade the smith be secret, gave him money,
And here they are. The letter, sir!

FRANK. True, take it, there it is;
And when thou seest me in my pleasant'st vein,
Ready to sit to supper, bring it me!

NICH. I'll do't; make no more question, but I'll do it. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* MISTRESS FRANKFORD, CRANWELL, WENDOLL, *and* JENKIN.)

MRS. F. Sirrah, 'tis six o'clock already struck;
Go bid them spread the cloth, and serve in supper!

JEN. It shall be done, forsooth, mistress. Where's Spigot, the butler, to give us out salt and trenchers?

WEN. We that have been a hunting all the day,
Come with prepared stomachs. — Master Frankford,
We wish'd you at our sport.

FRANK. My heart was with you, and my mind was on you. —
Fie, Master Cranwell! You are still thus sad. —
A stool, a stool! Where's Jenkin, and where's Nick?
'Tis supper time at least an hour ago.
What's the best news abroad?

WEN. I know none good.

FRANK. [*aside*]. But I know too much bad.

(*Enter* Butler *and* JENKIN, *with a table-cloth, bread, trenchers, and salt;* [*then exeunt*].)

CRAN. Methinks, sir, you might have that interest
In your wife's brother, to be more remiss
In his hard dealing against poor Sir Charles,

Who, as I hear, lies in York Castle, needy
And in great want.
FRANK. Did not more weighty business of mine own
Hold me away, I would have labour'd peace
Betwixt them with all care; indeed I would, sir.
MRS. F. I'll write unto my brother earnestly
In that behalf.
WEN. A charitable deed,
And will beget the good opinion
Of all your friends that love you, Mistress Frankford.
FRANK. That's you, for one; I know you love Sir Charles,
[*Aside.*] And my wife too, well.
WEN. He deserves the love
Of all true gentlemen; be yourselves judge!
FRANK. But supper, ho! — Now, as thou lov'st me, Wendoll,
Which I am sure thou dost, be merry, pleasant,
And frolic it to-night! — Sweet Mr. Cranwell,
Do you the like! — Wife, I protest, my heart
Was ne'er more bent on sweet alacrity.
Where be those lazy knaves to serve in supper?

(*Enter* NICHOLAS.)

NICH. Here's a letter, sir.
FRANK. Whence comes it, and who brought it?
NICH. A stripling that below attends your answer,
And, as he tells me, it is sent from York.
FRANK. Have him into the cellar, let him taste
A cup of our March beer; go, make him drink!
NICH. I'll make him drunk, if he be a Trojan.
FRANK. [*after reading the letter*]. My boots and spurs! Where's Jenkin? God forgive me,
How I neglect my business! — Wife, look here!
I have a matter to be tri'd to-morrow
By eight o'clock; and my attorney writes me,
I must be there betimes with evidence,
Or it will go against me. Where's my boots?

(*Enter* JENKIN, *with boots and spurs.*)

MRS. F. I hope your business craves no such despatch,
That you must ride to-night?
WEN. [*aside*]. I hope it doth.
FRANK. God's me! No such despatch?
Jenkin, my boots! Where's Nick? Saddle my roan,
And the grey dapple for himself! — Content ye,
It much concerns me. — Gentle Master Cranwell,
And Master Wendoll, in my absence use
The very ripest pleasure of my house!
WEN. Lord! Master Frankford, you will ride to-night?
The ways are dangerous.
FRANK. Therefore will I ride
Appointed well; and so shall Nick, my man.
MRS. F. I'll call you up by five o'clock to-morrow.
FRANK. No, by my faith, wife, I'll not trust to that:
'Tis not such easy rising in a morning
From one I love so dearly. No, by my faith,
I shall not leave so sweet a bedfellow,
But with much pain. You have made me a sluggard
Since I first knew you.
MRS. F. Then, if you needs will go
This dangerous evening, Master Wendoll,
Let me entreat you bear him company.
WEN. With all my heart, sweet mistress. — My boots, there!
FRANK. Fie, fie, that for my private business
I should disease a friend, and be a trouble
To the whole house! — Nick!
NICH. Anon, sir!
FRANK. Bring forth my gelding! — As you love me, sir,
Use no more words: a hand, good Master Cranwell!
CRAN. Sir, God be your good speed!
FRANK. Good night, sweet Nan; nay, nay, a kiss, and part!

[*Aside.*] Dissembling lips, you suit not with my heart.
(*Exeunt* [Frankford *and* Nicholas].)
Wen. [*aside*]. How business, time, and hours, all gracious prove,
And are the furtherers to my new-born love!
I am husband now in Master Frankford's place,
And must command the house. — My pleasure is
We will not sup abroad so publicly,
But in your private chamber, Mistress Frankford.
Mrs. F. Oh, sir! you are too public in your love.
And Master Frankford's wife ——
Cran. Might I crave favour,
I would entreat you I might see my chamber.
I am on the sudden grown exceeding ill,
And would be spar'd from supper.
Wen. Light there, ho! —
See you want nothing, sir, for if you do,
You injure that good man, and wrong me too.
Cran. I will make bold; good night! [*Exit.*]
Wen. How all conspire
To make our bosom sweet, and full entire!
Come, Nan, I pr'ythee, let us sup within!
Mrs. F. Oh! what a clog unto the soul is sin!
We pale offenders are still full of fear;
Every suspicious eye brings danger near;
When they, whose clear hearts from offence are free,
Despise report, base scandals do outface,
And stand at mere defiance with disgrace.
Wen. Fie, fie! You talk too like a puritan.
Mrs. F. You have tempted me to mischief, Master Wendoll:
I have done I know not what. Well, you plead custom;
That which for want of wit I granted erst,
I now must yield through fear. Come, come, let's in;
Once over shoes, we are straight o'er head in sin.
Wen. My jocund soul is joyful beyond measure;
I'll be profuse in Frankford's richest treasure. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene III.]

(*Enter* Cicely, Jenkin, *Butler, and other Serving-men.*)

Jen. My mistress and Master Wendoll, my master, sup in her chamber to-night. Cicely, you are preferr'd, from being the cook, to be chambermaid. Of all the loves betwixt thee and me, tell me what thou think'st of this?

Cic. Mum; there's an old proverb, — when the cat's away, the mouse may play.

Jen. Now you talk of a cat, Cicely, I smell a rat.

Cic. Good words, Jenkin, lest you be call'd to answer them!

Jen. Why, God make my mistress an honest woman! Are not these good words? Pray God my new master play not the knave with my old master! Is there any hurt in this? God send no villainy intended; and if they do sup together, pray God they do not lie together! God make my mistress chaste, and make us all His servants! What harm is there in all this? Nay, more; here in my hand, thou shalt never have my heart, unless thou say, Amen.

Cic. Amen; I pray God, I say.

(*Enter Serving-man.*)

Serving-man. My mistress sends that you should make less noise. So, lock up the doors, and see the household all got to bed! You, Jenkin, for this night are made the porter, to see the gates shut in.

Jen. Thus by little and little I creep into office. Come, to kennel, my masters, to kennel; 'tis eleven o'clock already.

Serving-man. When you have lock'd the gates in, you must send up the keys to my mistress.

Cic. Quickly, for God's sake, Jenkin; for I must carry them. I am neither pillow nor bolster, but I know more than both.

Jen. To bed, good Spigot; to bed, good honest serving-creatures; and let us sleep as snug as pigs in pease-straw! [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE IV.]

(*Enter* FRANKFORD *and* NICHOLAS.)

FRANK. Soft, soft! We've tied our geldings to a tree,
Two flight-shot off, lest by their thundering hoofs
They blab our coming back. Hear'st thou no noise?
NICH. Hear? I hear nothing but the owl and you.
FRANK. So; now my watch's hand points upon twelve,
And it is dead midnight. Where are my keys?
NICH. Here, sir.
FRANK. This is the key that opes my outward gate;
This, the hall-door; this, the withdrawing-chamber;
But this, that door that's bawd unto my shame,
Fountain and spring of all my bleeding thoughts,
Where the most hallowed order and true knot
Of nuptial sanctity hath been profan'd.
It leads to my polluted bed-chamber,
Once my terrestrial heaven, now my earth's hell,
The place where sins in all their ripeness dwell.—
But I forget myself; now to my gate!
NICH. It must ope with far less noise
than Cripplegate, or your plot's dash'd.
FRANK. So; reach me my dark lantern to the rest!
Tread softly, softly!
NICH. I will walk on eggs this pace.
FRANK. A general silence hath surpris'd the house,
And this is the last door. Astonishment,
Fear, and amazement, beat upon my heart,
Even as a madman beats upon a drum.
Oh, keep my eyes, you Heavens, before I enter,
From any sight that may transfix my soul;
Or, if there be so black a spectacle,
Oh, strike mine eyes stark blind; or if not so,
Lend me such patience to digest my grief,
That I may keep this white and virgin hand
From any violent outrage, or red murder!—
And with that prayer I enter.
[*Exeunt into the house.*]

[SCENE V.]

[*Enter* NICHOLAS.]

NICH. Here's a circumstance!
A man may be made cuckold in the time
That he's about it. An the case were mine,
As 'tis my master's, 'sblood! (that he makes me swear!),
I would have plac'd his action, enter'd there;
I would, I would!

[*Enter* FRANKFORD.]

FRANK. Oh! Oh!
NICH. Master! 'Sblood! Master, master!
FRANK. Oh me unhappy! I have found them lying
Close in each other's arms, and fast asleep.
But that I would not damn two precious souls,
Bought with my Saviour's blood, and send them, laden
With all their scarlet sins upon their backs,
Unto a fearful judgment, their two lives
Had met upon my rapier.
NICH. Master, what, have you left them sleeping still?
Let me go wake 'em!
FRANK. Stay, let me pause awhile!—
Oh, God, Oh, God! That it were possible
To undo things done; to call back yesterday;
That Time could turn up his swift sandy glass,
To untell the days, and to redeem these hours!
Or that the sun
Could, rising from the west, draw his coach backward;
Take from th' account of time so many minutes,
Till he had all these seasons call'd again,
Those minutes, and those actions done in them,
Even from her first offence; that I might take her
As spotless as an angel in my arms!

But, oh! I talk of things impossible,
And cast beyond the moon. God give me patience;
For I will in, and wake them. (*Exit.*)
Nich. Here's patience perforce!
He needs must trot afoot that tires his horse. [*Exit.*]

(*Enter* Wendoll, *running over the stage in a night-gown,* Frankford *after him with his sword drawn; a maid in her smock stays his hand, and clasps hold on him. He pauses for a while.*)

Frank. I thank thee, maid; thou, like the angel's hand,
Hast stay'd me from a bloody sacrifice. —
Go, villain; an my wrongs sit on thy soul
As heavy as this grief doth upon mine!
When thou record'st my many courtesies,
And shalt compare them with thy treacherous heart,
Lay them together, weigh them equally, —
'Twill be revenge enough, Go, to thy friend
A Judas; pray, pray, lest I live to see
Thee, Judas-like, hang'd on an elder-tree!

(*Enter* Mistress Frankford *in her smock, night-gown, and night-attire.*)

Mrs. F. Oh, by what word, what title, or what name,
Shall I entreat your pardon? Pardon! Oh!
I am as far from hoping such sweet grace,
As Lucifer from Heaven. To call you husband, —
(Oh me, most wretched!) I have lost that name;
I am no more your wife.
Nich. 'Sblood, sir, she swoons.
Frank. Spare thou thy tears, for I will weep for thee;
And keep thy count'nance, for I'll blush for thee.
Now, I protest, I think 'tis I am tainted,
For I am most asham'd; and 'tis more hard
For me to look upon thy guilty face
Than on the sun's clear brow. What! Would'st thou speak?
Mrs. F. I would I had no tongue, no ears, no eyes,
No apprehension, no capacity.
When do you spurn me like a dog? When tread me
Under feet? When drag me by the hair?
Though I deserve a thousand, thousand fold,
More than you can inflict — yet, once my husband,
For womanhood, to which I am a shame,
Though once an ornament — even for His sake,
That hath redeem'd our souls, mark not my face,
Nor hack me with your sword; but let me go
Perfect and undeformed to my tomb!
I am not worthy that I should prevail
In the least suit; no, not to speak to you,
Nor look on you, nor to be in your presence;
Yet, as an abject, this one suit I crave; —
This granted, I am ready for my grave.
Frank. My God, with patience arm me! — Rise, nay, rise,
And I'll debate with thee. Was it for want
Thou play'dst the strumpet? Wast thou not suppli'd
With every pleasure, fashion, and new toy, —
Nay, even beyond my calling?
Mrs. F. I was.
Frank. Was it, then, disability in me;
Or in thine eye seem'd he a properer man?
Mrs. F. Oh, no!
Frank. Did I not lodge thee in my bosom?
Wear thee here in my heart?
Mrs. F. You did.
Frank. I did, indeed; witness my tears, I did —
Go, bring my infants hither! —

[*Two Children are brought in.*]

Oh, Nan! Oh, Nan!
If neither fear of shame, regard of honour,
The blemish of my house, nor my dear love,
Could have withheld thee from so lewd a fact;
Yet for these infants, these young, harmless souls,
On whose white brows thy shame is character'd,

And grows in greatness as they wax in years, —
Look but on them, and melt away in tears! —
Away with them; lest, as her spotted body
Hath stain'd their names with stripe of bastardy,
So her adulterous breath may blast their spirits
With her infectious thoughts! Away with them! [*Exeunt Children.*]

MRS. F. In this one life, I die ten thousand deaths.

FRANK. Stand up, stand up! I will do nothing rashly.
I will retire awhile into my study,
And thou shalt hear thy sentence presently. (*Exit.*)

MRS. F. 'Tis welcome, be it death. Oh me, base strumpet,
That, having such a husband, such sweet children,
Must enjoy neither! Oh, to redeem mine honour,
I'd have this hand cut off, these my breasts sear'd;
Be rack'd, strappado'd, put to any torment:
Nay, to whip but this scandal out, I'd hazard
The rich and dear redemption of my soul!
He cannot be so base as to forgive me,
Nor I so shameless to accept his pardon.
Oh, women, women, you that yet have kept
Your holy matrimonial vow unstain'd,
Make me your instance; when you tread awry,
Your sins, like mine, will on your conscience lie.

(*Enter* CICELY, SPIGOT, *all the Serving-men, and* JENKIN, *as newly come out of bed.*)

ALL. Oh, mistress, mistress! What have you done, mistress?

NICH. 'Sblood, what a caterwauling keep you here!

JEN. O Lord, mistress, how comes this to pass? My master is run away in his shirt, and never so much as call'd me to bring his clothes after him.

MRS. F. See what guilt is! Here stand I in this place,
Asham'd to look my servants in the face.

(*Enter* FRANKFORD *and* CRANWELL; *whom seeing, she falls on her knees.*)

FRANK. My words are regist'red in Heaven already.
With patience hear me! I'll not martyr thee,
Nor mark thee for a strumpet; but with usage
Of more humility torment thy soul,
And kill thee even with kindness.

CRAN. Master Frankford ——

FRANK. Good Master Cranwell! — Woman, hear thy judgment!
Go make thee ready in thy best attire;
Take with thee all thy gowns, all thy apparel;
Leave nothing that did ever call thee mistress,
Or by whose sight, being left here in the house,
I may remember such a woman by.
Choose thee a bed and hangings for thy chamber;
Take with thee every thing which hath thy mark,
And get thee to my manor seven mile off,
Where live; — 'tis thine; I freely give it thee.
My tenants by shall furnish thee with wains
To carry all thy stuff within two hours;
No longer will I limit thee my sight.
Choose which of all my servants thou lik'st best,
And they are thine to attend thee.

MRS. F. A mild sentence.

FRANK. But, as thou hop'st for Heaven, as thou believ'st
Thy name's recorded in the book of life,
I charge thee never after this sad day
To see me, or to meet me; or to send,
By word or writing, gift or otherwise,
To move me, by thyself, or by thy friends;
Nor challenge any part in my two children.
So farewell, Nan; for we will henceforth be
As we had never seen, ne'er more shall see.

MRS. F. How full my heart is, in mine eyes appears;
What wants in words, I will supply in tears.
FRANK. Come, take your coach, your stuff; all must along.
Servants and all make ready; all begone!
It was thy hand cut two hearts out of one. [*Exeunt.*]

[ACT V.]

[SCENE I.]

(*Enter* SIR CHARLES MOUNTFORD, *gentlemanlike, and his Sister, gentlewoman-like.*)

SUSAN. Brother, why have you trick'd me like a bride,
Bought me this gay attire, these ornaments?
Forget you our estate, our poverty?
SIR C. Call me not brother, but imagine me
Some barbarous outlaw, or uncivil kern;
For if thou shutt'st thine eye, and only hear'st
The words that I shall utter, thou shalt judge me
Some staring ruffian, not thy brother Charles.
Oh, sister! ——
SUSAN. Oh, brother! what doth this strange language mean?
SIR C. Dost love me, sister? Wouldst thou see me live
A bankrupt beggar in the world's disgrace,
And die indebted to mine enemies?
Wouldst thou behold me stand like a huge beam
In the world's eye, a bye-word and a scorn?
It lies in thee of these to acquit me free,
And all my debt I may outstrip by thee.
SUSAN. By me? Why, I have nothing, nothing left;
I owe even for the clothes upon my back;
I am not worth ——
SIR C. O sister, say not so!
It lies in you my downcast state to raise;
To make me stand on even points with the world.
Come, sister, you are rich; indeed you are,
And in your power you have, without delay
Acton's five hundred pounds back to repay.
SUSAN. Till now I had thought you lov'd me. By my honour
(Which I have kept as spotless as the moon),
I ne'er was mistress of that single doit
Which I reserv'd not to supply your wants;
And do you think that I would hoard from you?
Now, by my hopes in Heaven, knew I the means
To buy you from the slavery of your debts
(Especially from Acton, whom I hate),
I would redeem it with my life or blood!
SIR C. I challenge it, and, kindred set apart,
Thus, ruffian-like, I lay siege to thy heart.
What do I owe to Acton?
SUSAN. Why, some five hundred pounds; towards which, I swear,
In all the world I have not one denier.
SIR C. It will not prove so. Sister, now resolve me:
What do you think (and speak your conscience)
Would Acton give, might he enjoy your bed?
SUSAN. He would not shrink to spend a thousand pound
To give the Mountfords' name so deep a wound.
SIR C. A thousand pound! I but five hundred owe:
Grant him your bed; he's paid with interest so.
SUSAN. Oh, brother!
SIR C. Oh, sister! only this one way,
With that rich jewel you my debts may pay.
In speaking this my cold heart shakes with shame;
Nor do I woo you in a brother's name,
But in a stranger's. Shall I die in debt
To Acton, my grand foe, and you still wear
The precious jewel that he holds so dear?
SUSAN. My honour I esteem as dear and precious
As my redemption.
SIR C. I esteem you, sister,
As dear, for so dear prizing it.
SUSAN. Will Charles

Have me cut off my hands, and send them Acton?
Rip up my breast, and with my bleeding heart
Present him as a token?
Sir C. Neither, sister;
But hear me in my strange assertion!
Thy honour and my soul are equal in my regard;
Nor will thy brother Charles survive thy shame.
His kindness, like a burden, hath surcharg'd me,
And under his good deeds I stooping go,
Not with an upright soul. Had I remain'd
In prison still, there doubtless I had died.
Then, unto him that freed me from that prison,
Still do I owe this life. What mov'd my foe
To enfranchise me? 'Twas, sister, for your love;
With full five hundred pounds he bought your love; —
And shall he not enjoy it? Shall the weight
Of all this heavy burden lean on me,
And will not you bear part? You did partake
The joy of my release; will you not stand
In joint-bond bound to satisfy the debt?
Shall I be only charg'd?
Susan. But that I know
These arguments come from an honour'd mind,
As in your most extremity of need
Scorning to stand in debt to one you hate,—
Nay, rather would engage your unsustain'd honour,
Than to be held ingrate, — I should condemn you.
I see your resolution, and assent;
So Charles will have me, and I am content.
Sir C. For this I trick'd you up.
Susan. But here's a knife,
To save mine honour, shall slice out my life.
Sir C. I know thou pleasest me a thousand times
More in that resolution than thy grant. —
Observe her love; to soothe it to my suit,
Her honour she will hazard, though not lose;
To bring me out of debt, her rigorous hand
Will pierce her heart, — O wonder! — that will choose,
Rather than stain her blood, her life to lose.
Come, you sad sister to a woful brother,
This is the gate. I'll bear him such a present,
Such an acquittance for the knight to seal,
As will amaze his senses, and surprise
With admiration all his fantasies.

(*Enter* Sir Francis Acton *and* Malby.)

Susan. Before his unchaste thoughts shall seize on me,
'Tis here shall my imprison'd soul set free.
Sir F. How! Mountford with his sister, hand in hand!
What miracle's afoot?
Mal. It is a sight
Begets in me much admiration.
Sir C. Stand not amaz'd to see me thus attended!
Acton, I owe thee money, and, being unable
To bring thee the full sum in ready coin,
Lo! for thy more assurance, here's a pawn,—
My sister, my dear sister, whose chaste honour
I prize above a million. Here! Nay, take her;
She's worth your money, man; do not forsake her.
Sir F. I would he were in earnest!
Susan. Impute it not to my immodesty.
My brother, being rich in nothing else
But in his interest that he hath in me,
According to his poverty hath brought you
Me, all his store; whom, howsoe'er you prize,
As forfeit to your hand, he values highly,
And would not sell, but to acquit your debt,
For any emperor's ransom.
Sir F. Stern heart, relent,
Thy former cruelty at length repent!
Was ever known, in any former age,
Such honourable, wrested courtesy?
Lands, honours, life, and all the world forego,
Rather than stand engag'd to such a foe!

Sir C. Acton, she is too poor to be thy bride,
And I too much oppos'd to be thy brother.
There, take her to thee; if thou hast the heart
To seize her as a rape, or lustful prey;
To blur our house, that never yet was stain'd;
To murder her that never meant thee harm;
To kill me now, whom once thou sav'dst from death: —
Do them at once; on her all these rely,
And perish with her spotless chastity.

Sir F. You overcome me in your love, Sir Charles.
I cannot be so cruel to a lady
I love so dearly. Since you have not spar'd
To engage your reputation to the world,
Your sister's honour, which you prize so dear,
Nay, all the comforts which you hold on earth,
To grow out of my debt, being your foe, —
Your honour'd thoughts, lo! thus I recompense.
Your metamorphos'd foe receives your gift
In satisfaction of all former wrongs.
This jewel I will wear here in my heart;
And where before I thought her, for her wants,
Too base to be my bride, to end all strife,
I seal you my dear brother, her my wife.

Susan. You still exceed us. I will yield to fate,
And learn to love, where I till now did hate.

Sir C. With that enchantment you have charm'd my soul
And made me rich even in those very words!
I pay no debt, but am indebted more;
Rich in your love, I never can be poor.

Sir F. All's mine is yours; we are alike in state;
Let's knit in love what was oppos'd in hate!
Come, for our nuptials we will straight provide,
Blest only in our brother and fair bride.
[*Exeunt.*]

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Cranwell, Frankford, *and* Nicholas.)

Cran. Why do you search each room about your house,
Now that you have despatch'd your wife away?

Frank. Oh, sir! To see that nothing may be left
That ever was my wife's. I lov'd her dearly;
And when I do but think of her unkindness,
My thoughts are all in hell; to avoid which torment,
I would not have a bodkin or a cuff,
A bracelet, necklace, or rabato wire,
Nor anything that ever was call'd hers,
Left me, by which I might remember her.—
Seek round about.

Nich. 'Sblood! master, here's her lute flung in a corner.

Frank. Her lute! Oh, God! Upon this instrument
Her fingers have rung quick division,
Sweeter than that which now divides our hearts.
These frets have made me pleasant, that have now
Frets of my heart-strings made. Oh, Master Cranwell,
Oft hath she made this melancholy wood
(Now mute and dumb for her disastrous chance)
Speak sweetly many a note, sound many a strain
To her own ravishing voice; which being well strung,
What pleasant strange airs have they jointly sung! —
Post with it after her! — Now nothing's left;
Of her and hers I am at once bereft.

Nich. I'll ride and overtake her; do my message,
And come back again. [*Exit.*]

Cran. Meantime, sir, if you please,
I'll to Sir Francis Acton, and inform him
Of what hath past betwixt you and his sister.

Frank. Do as you please. — How ill am I bested,
To be a widower ere my wife be dead!
[*Exeunt.*]

[Scene III.]

(*Enter* Mistress Frankford; *with* Jenkin, *her maid* Cicely, *her Coachmen, and three Carters.*)

Mrs. F. Bid my coach stay! Why should I ride in state,
Being hurl'd so low down by the hand of fate?
A seat like to my fortunes let me have, —
Earth for my chair, and for my bed a grave!

Jen. Comfort, good mistress; you have watered your coach with tears already. You have but two miles now to go to your manor. A man cannot say by my old master Frankford as he may say by me, that he wants manors; for he hath three or four, of which this is one that we are going to now.

Cic. Good mistress, be of good cheer! Sorrow, you see, hurts you, but helps you not; we all mourn to see you so sad.

Carter. Mistress, I spy one of my landlord's men
Come riding post: 'tis like he brings some news.

Mrs. F. Comes he from Master Frankford, he is welcome;
So is his news, because they come from him.

(*Enter* Nicholas.)

Nich. There!

Mrs. F. I know the lute. Oft have I sung to thee;
We both are out of tune, both out of time.

Nich. Would that had been the worst instrument that e'er you played on! My master commends him to ye; there's all he can find was ever yours; he hath nothing left that ever you could lay claim to but his own heart, — and he could afford you that! All that I have to deliver you is this: he prays you to forget him; and so he bids you farewell.

Mrs. F. I thank him; he is kind, and ever was.
All you that have true feeling of my grief,
That know my loss, and have relenting hearts,
Gird me about, and help me with your tears
To wash my spotted sins! My lute shall groan;
It cannot weep, but shall lament my moan.
[*She plays.*]

(*Enter* Wendoll [*behind*].)

Wen. Pursu'd with horror of a guilty soul,
And with the sharp scourge of repentance lash'd,
I fly from mine own shadow. O my stars!
What have my parents in their lives deserv'd,
That you should lay this penance on their son?
When I but think of Master Frankford's love,
And lay it to my treason, or compare
My murdering him for his relieving me,
It strikes a terror like a lightning's flash,
To scorch my blood up. Thus I, like the owl,
Asham'd of day, live in these shadowy woods,
Afraid of every leaf or murmuring blast,
Yet longing to receive some perfect knowledge
How he hath dealt with her. [*Seeing* Mistress Frankford.] O my sad fate!
Here, and so far from home, and thus attended!
Oh, God! I have divorc'd the truest turtles
That ever liv'd together, and, being divided,
In several places make their several moan;
She in the fields laments, and he at home;
So poets write that Orpheus made the trees
And stones to dance to his melodious harp,
Meaning the rustic and the barbarous hinds,
That had no understanding part in them:
So she from these rude carters tears extracts,
Making their flinty hearts with grief to rise,
And draw down rivers from their rocky eyes.

Mrs. F. [*to* Nicholas]. If you return unto my master, say

(Though not from me, for I am all unworthy
To blast his name so with a strumpet's tongue)
That you have seen me weep, wish myself dead!
Nay, you may say, too (for my vow is past),
Last night you saw me eat and drink my last.
This to your master you may say and swear;
For it is writ in heaven, and decreed here.
Nich. I'll say you wept; I'll swear you made me sad.
Why, how now, eyes? What now? What's here to do?
I'm gone, or I shall straight turn baby too.
Wen. [*aside*]. I cannot weep, my heart is all on fire.
Curs'd be the fruits of my unchaste desire!
Mrs. F. Go, break this lute upon my coach's wheel,
As the last music that I e'er shall make, —
Not as my husband's gift, but my farewell
To all earth's joy; and so your master tell!
Nich. If I can for crying.
Wen. [*aside*]. Grief, have done,
Or, like a madman, I shall frantic run.
Mrs. F. You have beheld the wofull'st wretch on earth, —
A woman made of tears; would you had words
To express but what you see! My inward grief
No tongue can utter; yet unto your power
You may describe my sorrow, and disclose
To thy sad master my abundant woes.
Nich. I'll do your commendations.
Mrs. F. Oh, no!
I dare not so presume; nor to my children!
I am disclaim'd in both; alas! I am.
Oh, never teach them, when they come to speak,
To name the name of mother: chide their tongue,
If they by chance light on that hated word;
Tell them 'tis naught; for when that word they name,
Poor, pretty souls! they harp on their own shame.
Wen. [*aside*]. To recompense their wrongs, what canst thou do?
Thou hast made her husbandless, and childless too.
Mrs. F. I have no more to say. — Speak not for me;
Yet you may tell your master what you see.
Nich. I'll do't. (*Exit.*)
Wen. [*aside*]. I'll speak to her, and comfort her in grief.
Oh, but her wound cannot be cur'd with words!
No matter, though; I'll do my best good will
To work a cure on her whom I did kill.
Mrs. F. So, now unto my coach, then to my home,
So to my death-bed; for from this sad hour,
I never will nor eat, nor drink, nor taste
Of any cates that may preserve my life.
I never will nor smile, nor sleep, nor rest;
But when my tears have wash'd my black soul white,
Sweet Saviour, to thy hands I yield my sprite.
Wen. [*coming forward.*] Oh, Mistress Frankford!
Mrs. F. Oh, for God's sake, fly!
The devil doth come to tempt me, ere I die.
My coach! — This sin, that with an angel's face
Conjur'd mine honour, till he sought my wrack,
In my repentant eye seems ugly, black.
(*Exeunt all* [*except* Wendoll *and* Jenkin]; *the Carters whistling.*)

Jen. What, my young master, that fled in his shirt! How come you by your clothes again? You have made our house in a sweet pickle, ha' ye not, think you? What, shall I serve you still, or cleave to the old house?

Wen. Hence, slave! Away, with thy unseason'd mirth!
Unless thou canst shed tears, and sigh, and howl,
Curse thy sad fortunes, and exclaim on fate,
Thou art not for my turn.

Jen. Marry, an you will not, another will; farewell, and be hang'd! Would you had never come to have kept this coil within our doors! We shall ha' you run away like a sprite again. [*Exit.*]

Wen. She's gone to death; I live to want and woe,
Her life, her sins, and all upon my head.
And I must now go wander, like a Cain,
In foreign countries and remoted climes,
Where the report of my ingratitude
Cannot be heard. I'll over first to France,
And so to Germany and Italy;
Where, when I have recovered, and by travel
Gotten those perfect tongues, and that these rumours
May in their height abate, I will return:
And I divine (however now dejected),
My worth and parts being by some great man prais'd,
At my return I may in court be rais'd. (*Exit.*)

[Scene IV.]

(*Enter* Sir Francis Acton, Sir Charles Mountford, Cranwell, [Malby,] *and* Susan.)

Sir F. Brother, and now my wife, I think these troubles,
Fall on my head by justice of the heavens,
For being so strict to you in your extremities;
But we are now aton'd. I would my sister
Could with like happiness o'ercome her griefs
As we have ours.

Susan. You tell us, Master Cranwell, wondrous things
Touching the patience of that gentleman,
With what strange virtue he demeans his grief.

Cran. I told you what I was a witness of;
It was my fortune to lodge there that night.

Sir F. Oh, that same villain, Wendoll! 'Twas his tongue
That did corrupt her; she was of herself
Chaste and devoted well. Is this the house?

Cran. Yes, sir; I take it, here your sister lies.

Sir F. My brother Frankford show'd too mild a spirit
In the revenge of such a loathed crime.
Less than he did, no man of spirit could do.
I am so far from blaming his revenge,
That I commend it. Had it been my case,
Their souls at once had from their breasts been freed;
Death to such deeds of shame is the due meed.

(*Enter* Jenkin *and* Cicely.)

Jen. Oh, my mistress, mistress! my poor mistress!

Cicely. Alas! that ever I was born; what shall I do for my poor mistress?

Sir C. Why, what of her?

Jen. Oh, Lord, sir! she no sooner heard that her brother and her friends had come to see how she did, but she, for very shame of her guilty conscience, fell into such a swoon, that we had much ado to get life in her.

Susan. Alas, that she should bear so hard a fate!
Pity it is repentance comes too late.

Sir F. Is she so weak in body?

Jen. Oh, sir! I can assure you there's no hope of life in her; for she will take no sust'nance: she hath plainly starv'd herself, and now she's as lean as a lath. She ever looks for the good hour. Many gentlemen and gentlewomen of the country are come to comfort her.

[Scene V.]

[Sir Charles Mountford, Sir Francis Acton, Malby, Cranwell, *and* Susan.]

(*Enter* Mistress Frankford *in her bed.*)

Mal. How fare you, Mistress Frankford?

Mrs. F. Sick, sick, oh, sick! Give me some air, I pray you!
Tell me, oh, tell me, where is Master Frankford?
Will not he deign to see me ere I die?

Mal. Yes, Mistress Frankford; divers gentlemen,
Your loving neighbours, with that just request
Have mov'd, and told him of your weak estate:
Who, though with much ado to get belief,
Examining of the general circumstance,

Seeing your sorrow and your penitence,
And hearing therewithal the great desire
You have to see him, ere you left the world,
He gave to us his faith to follow us,
And sure he will be here immediately.
Mrs. F. You have half reviv'd me with the pleasing news,
Raise me a little higher in my bed. —
Blush I not, brother Acton? Blush I not, Sir Charles?
Can you not read my fault writ in my cheek?
Is not my crime there? Tell me, gentlemen.
Sir C. Alas, good mistress, sickness hath not left you
Blood in your face enough to make you blush.
Mrs. F. Then, sickness, like a friend, my fault would hide. —
Is my husband come? My soul but tarries
His arrive; then I am fit for heaven.
Sir F. I came to chide you, but my words of hate
Are turn'd to pity and compassionate grief.
I came to rate you, but my brawls, you see,
Melt into tears, and I must weep by thee.—
Here's Master Frankford now.

(*Enter* Frankford.)

Frank. Good morrow, brother; morrow, gentlemen!
God, that hath laid this cross upon our heads,
Might (had He pleas'd) have made our cause of meeting
On a more fair and more contented ground;
But He that made us made us to this woe.
Mrs. F. And is he come? Methinks, that voice I know.
Frank. How do you, woman?
Mrs. F. Well, Master Frankford, well; but shall be better,
I hope within this hour. Will you vouchsafe,
Out of your grace and your humanity,
To take a spotted strumpet by the hand?
Frank. This hand once held my heart in faster bonds,
Than now 'tis gripp'd by me. God pardon them
That made us first break hold!
Mrs. F. Amen, amen!
Out of my zeal to Heaven, whither I'm now bound,
I was so impudent to wish you here;
And once more beg your pardon. O, good man,
And father to my children, pardon me.
Pardon, oh, pardon me: my fault so heinous is,
That if you in this world forgive it not,
Heaven will not clear it in the world to come.
Faintness hath so usurp'd upon my knees,
That kneel I cannot; but on my heart's knees
My prostrate soul lies thrown down at your feet,
To beg your gracious pardon. Pardon, oh, pardon me!
Frank. As freely, from the low depth of my soul,
As my Redeemer hath forgiven His death,
I pardon thee. I will shed tears for thee; pray with thee;
And, in mere pity of thy weak estate,
I'll wish to die with thee.
All. So do we all.
Nich. So will not I;
I'll sigh and sob, but, by my faith, not die.
Sir F. Oh, Master Frankford, all the near alliance
I lose by her, shall be suppli'd in thee.
You are my brother by the nearest way;
Her kindred hath fall'n off, but yours doth stay.
Frank. Even as I hope for pardon, at that day
When the Great Judge of heaven in scarlet sits,
So be thou pardon'd! Though thy rash offence
Divorc'd our bodies, thy repentant tears
Unite our souls.
Sir C. Then comfort, Mistress Frankford!
You see your husband hath forgiven your fall;
Then rouse your spirits, and cheer your fainting soul!
Susan. How is it with you?
Sir F. How d'ye feel yourself?
Mrs. F. Not of this world.

Frank. I see you are not, and I weep to see it.
My wife, the mother to my pretty babes!
Both those lost names I do restore thee back,
And with this kiss I wed thee once again.
Though thou art wounded in thy honour'd name,
And with that grief upon thy death-bed liest,
Honest in heart, upon my soul, thou diest.

Mrs. F. Pardon'd on earth, soul, thou in heaven art free;
Once more thy wife, dies thus embracing thee. [*Dies.*]

Frank. New-married, and new-widow'd. — Oh! she's dead,
And a cold grave must be her nuptial bed.

Sir C. Sir, be of good comfort, and your heavy sorrow
Part equally amongst us; storms divided
Abate their force, and with less rage are guided.

Cran. Do, Master Frankford; he that hath least part,
Will find enough to drown one troubled heart.

Sir F. Peace with thee, Nan! — Brothers and gentlemen,
All we that can plead interest in her grief,
Bestow upon her body funeral tears!
Brother, had you with threats and usage bad
Punish'd her sin, the grief of her offence
Had not with such true sorrow touch'd her heart.

Frank. I see it had not; therefore, on her grave
Will I bestow this funeral epitaph,
Which on her marble tomb shall be engrav'd.
In golden letters shall these words be fill'd:
Here lies she whom her husband's kindness kill'd.

THE EPILOGUE

An honest crew, disposed to be merry,
Came to a tavern by, and call'd for wine.
The drawer brought it, smiling like a cherry,
And told them it was pleasant, neat and fine.
'Taste it,' quoth one. He did so. 'Fie!' (quoth he)
'This wine was good; now't runs too near the lee.'

Another sipp'd, to give the wine his due,
And said unto the rest, it drunk too flat;
The third said, it was old; the fourth, too new;
Nay, quoth the fifth, the sharpness likes me not.
Thus, gentlemen, you see how, in one hour,
The wine was new, old, flat, sharp, sweet, and sour.

Unto this wine we do allude our play,
Which some will judge too trivial, some too grave:
You as our guests we entertain this day,
And bid you welcome to the best we have.
Excuse us, then; good wine may be disgrac'd,
When every several mouth hath sundry taste.

PHILASTER

OR

LOVE LIES A-BLEEDING

By FRANCIS BEAUMONT and JOHN FLETCHER

(*c.* 1609)

[DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

The King of Sicily.
Philaster, Heir to the Crown.
Pharamond, Prince of Spain.
Dion, a Lord.
Cleremont, } Noble Gentlemen,
Thrasiline, } his associates.
An Old Captain.
Five Citizens.
A Country Fellow.
Two Woodmen.
The King's Guard and Train.

Arethusa, Daughter of the King.
Euphrasia, Daughter of Dion, but disguised like a Page and called Bellario.
Megra, a lascivious Lady.
Galatea, a wise, modest Lady attending the Princess.
Two other Ladies.

Scene — Sicily.]

PHILASTER

OR

LOVE LIES A-BLEEDING

ACT I.

Scene I.

(*Enter* Dion, Cleremont, *and* Thrasiline.)

Cler. Here's nor lords nor ladies.

Dion. Credit me, gentlemen, I wonder at it. They receiv'd strict charge from the King to attend here; besides, it was boldly published that no officer should forbid any gentleman that desired to attend and hear.

Cle. Can you guess the cause?

Dion. Sir, it is plain, about the Spanish Prince that's come to marry our kingdom's heir and be our sovereign.

Thra. Many that will seem to know much say she looks not on him like a maid in love.

Dion. Faith, sir, the multitude, that seldom know any thing but their own opinions, speak that they would have; but the prince, before his own approach, receiv'd so many confident messages from the state, that I think she's resolv'd to be rul'd.

Cle. Sir, it is thought, with her he shall enjoy both these kingdoms of Sicily and Calabria.

Dion. Sir, it is without controversy so meant. But 'twill be a troublesome labour for him to enjoy both these kingdoms with safety, the right heir to one of them living, and living so virtuously: especially, the people admiring the bravery of his mind and lamenting his injuries.

Cle. Who? Philaster?

Dion. Yes; whose father, we all know, was by our late King of Calabria unrighteously deposed from his fruitful Sicily. Myself drew some blood in those wars, which I would give my hand to be washed from.

Cle. Sir, my ignorance in state-policy will not let me know why, Philaster being heir to one of these kingdoms, the King should suffer him to walk abroad with such free liberty.

Dion. Sir, it seems your nature is more constant than to inquire after state-news. But the King, of late, made a hazard of both the kingdoms, of Sicily and his own, with offering but to imprison Philaster; at which the city was in arms, not to be charm'd down by any state-order or proclamation, till they saw Philaster ride through the streets pleas'd and without a guard: at which they threw their hats and their arms from them; some to make bonfires, some to drink, all for his deliverance: which wise men say is the cause the King labours to bring in the power of a foreign nation to awe his own with.

(*Enter* Galatea, *a Lady, and* Megra.)

Thra. See, the ladies! What's the first?

Dion. A wise and modest gentlewoman that attends the princess.

Cle. The second?

Dion. She is one that may stand still discreetly enough and ill-favour'dly dance her measure; simper when she is courted by her friend, and slight her husband.

Cle. The last?

Dion. Faith, I think she is one whom the state keeps for the agents of our confederate princes; she'll cog and lie with a whole army, before the league shall break. Her name is common through the kingdom, and the trophies of her dishonour advanced beyond Hercules' Pillars. She loves to try the several constitutions of men's bodies; and, indeed, has destroyed the worth of her own body by making experiment upon it for the good of the commonwealth.

Cle. She's a profitable member.

Meg. Peace, if you love me! You shall see these gentlemen stand their ground and not court us.

Gal. What if they should?

La. What if they should!

Meg. Nay, let her alone. — What if they should! Why, if they should, I say they were never abroad. What foreigner would do so? It writes them directly untravell'd.

Gal. Why, what if they be?

La. What if they be!

Meg. Good madam, let her go on. — What if they be! Why, if they be, I will justify, they cannot maintain discourse with a judicious lady, nor make a leg nor say "Excuse me."

Gal. Ha, ha, ha!

Meg. Do you laugh, madam?

Dion. Your desires upon you, ladies!

Meg. Then you must sit beside us.

Dion. I shall sit near you then, lady.

Meg. Near me, perhaps; but there's a lady endures no stranger; and to me you appear a very strange fellow.

La. Methinks he's not so strange; he would quickly be acquainted.

Thra. Peace, the King!

(*Enter* King, Pharamond, Arethusa, *and Train.*)

King. To give a stronger testimony of love
Than sickly promises (which commonly
In princes find both birth and burial
In one breath) we have drawn you, worthy sir,
To make your fair endearments to our daughter,
And worthy services known to our subjects,
Now lov'd and wondered at; next, our intent
To plant you deeply our immediate heir
Both to our blood and kingdoms. For this lady,
(The best part of your life, as you confirm me,
And I believe,) though her few years and sex
Yet teach her nothing but her fears and blushes,
Desires without desire, discourse and knowledge
Only of what herself is to herself,
Make her feel moderate health; and when she sleeps,
In making no ill day, knows no ill dreams.
Think not, dear sir, these undivided parts,
That must mould up a virgin, are put on
To show her so, as borrowed ornaments
To speak her perfect love to you, or add
An artificial shadow to her nature, —
No, sir; I boldly dare proclaim her yet
No woman. But woo her still, and think her modesty
A sweeter mistress than the offer'd language
Of any dame, were she a queen, whose eye
Speaks common loves and comforts to her servants.
Last, noble son (for so I now must call you),
What I have done thus public, is not only
To add a comfort in particular
To you or me, but all; and to confirm
The nobles and the gentry of these kingdoms
By oath to your succession, which shall be
Within this month at most.

Thra. This will be hardly done.

Cle. It must be ill done, if it be done.

Dion. When 'tis at best, 'twill be but half done, whilst
So brave a gentleman is wrong'd and flung off.

Thra. I fear.

Cle. Who does not?

Dion. I fear not for myself, and yet I fear too.
Well, we shall see, we shall see. No more.

Pha. Kissing your white hand, mistress, I take leave
To thank your royal father; and thus far
To be my own free trumpet. Understand,
Great King, and these your subjects, mine that must be,
(For so deserving you have spoke me, sir,;
And so deserving I dare speak myself,)

To what a person, of what eminence,
Ripe expectation, of what faculties,
Manners and virtues, you would wed your kingdoms;
You in me have your wishes. Oh, this country!
By more than all the gods, I hold it happy;
Happy in their dear memories that have been
Kings great and good; happy in yours that is;
And from you (as a chronicle to keep
Your noble name from eating age) do I
Opine myself most happy. Gentlemen,
Believe me in a word, a prince's word,
There shall be nothing to make up a kingdom
Mighty and flourishing, defenced, fear'd,
Equal to be commanded and obeyed,
But through the travails of my life I'll find it,
And tie it to this country. By all the gods,
My reign shall be so easy to the subject,
That every man shall be his prince himself,
And his own law — yet I his prince and law.
And dearest lady, to your dearest self
(Dear in the choice of him whose name and lustre
Must make you more and mightier) let me say,
You are the blessed'st living; for, sweet princess,
You shall enjoy a man of men to be
Your servant; you shall make him yours, for whom
Great queens must die.

THRA. Miraculous!

CLE. This speech calls him Spaniard, being nothing but a large inventory of his own commendations.

DION. I wonder what's his price; for certainly
He'll sell himself, he has so prais'd his shape.

(*Enter* PHILASTER.)

But here comes one more worthy those large speeches,
Than the large speaker of them.
Let me be swallowed quick, if I can find,
In all the anatomy of yon man's virtues,
One sinew sound enough to promise for him,
He shall be constable. By this sun,
He'll ne'er make king unless it be of trifles,
In my poor judgment.

PHI. [*kneeling*]. Right noble sir, as low as my obedience,
And with a heart as loyal as my knee,
I beg your favour.

KING. Rise; you have it, sir.

[PHILASTER *rises*.]

DION. Mark but the King, how pale he looks! He fears!
Oh, this same whoreson conscience, how it jades us!

KING. Speak your intents, sir.

PHI. Shall I speak 'em freely?
Be still my royal sovereign.

KING. As a subject,
We give you freedom.

DION. Now it heats.

PHI. Then thus I turn
My language to you, prince; you, foreign man!
Ne'er stare nor put on wonder, for you must
Endure me, and you shall. This earth you tread upon
(A dowry, as you hope, with this fair princess),
By my dead father (oh, I had a father,
Whose memory I bow to!) was not left
To your inheritance, and I up and living —
Having myself about me and my sword,
The souls of all my name and memories,
These arms and some few friends beside the gods —
To part so calmly with it, and sit still
And say, "I might have been." I tell thee, Pharamond,
When thou art king, look I be dead and rotten,
And my name ashes: for, hear me, Pharamond!
This very ground thou goest on, this fat earth,
My father's friends made fertile with their faiths,
Before that day of shame shall gape and swallow
Thee and thy nation, like a hungry grave,
Into her hidden bowels. Prince, it shall:

By the just gods, it shall!
Pha. He's mad; beyond cure, mad.
Dion. Here is a fellow has some fire in 's veins:
The outlandish prince looks like a tooth-drawer.
Phi. Sir Prince of popinjays, I'll make it well
Appear to you I am not mad.
King. You displease us:
You are too bold.
Phi. No, sir, I am too tame,
Too much a turtle, a thing born without passion,
A faint shadow, that every drunken cloud
Sails over, and makes nothing.
King. I do not fancy this.
Call our physicians; sure, he's somewhat tainted.
Thra. I do not think 'twill prove so.
Dion. H'as given him a general purge already,
For all the right he has; and now he means
To let him blood. Be constant, gentlemen:
By heaven, I'll run his hazard,
Although I run my name out of the kingdom!
Cle. Peace, we are all one soul.
Pha. What you have seen in me to stir offence
I cannot find, unless it be this lady,
Offer'd into mine arms with the succession;
Which I must keep, (though it hath pleas'd your fury
To mutiny within you,) without disputing
Your genealogies, or taking knowledge
Whose branch you are. The King will leave it me,
And I dare make it mine. You have your answer.
Phi. If thou wert sole inheritor to him
That made the world his, and couldst see no sun
Shine upon any thing but thine; were Pharamond
As truly valiant as I feel him cold,
And ring'd amongst the choicest of his friends
(Such as would blush to talk such serious follies,
Or back such bellied commendations),
And from this presence, spite of all these bugs,
You should hear further from me.
King. Sir, you wrong the prince; I gave you not this freedom
To brave our best friends. You deserve our frown.
Go to; be better temper'd.
Phi. It must be, sir, when I am nobler us'd.
Gal. Ladies,
This would have been a pattern of succession,
Had he ne'er met this mischief. By my life,
He is the worthiest the true name of man
This day within my knowledge.
Meg. I cannot tell what you may call your knowledge;
But the other is the man set in mine eye.
Oh, 'tis a prince of wax!
Gal. A dog it is.
King. Philaster, tell me
The injuries you aim at in your riddles.
Phi. If you had my eyes, sir, and sufferance,
My griefs upon you, and my broken fortunes,
My wants great, and now nought but hopes and fears,
My wrongs would make ill riddles to be laught at.
Dare you be still my king, and right me not?
King. Give me your wrongs in private.
Phi. Take them,
And ease me of a load would bow strong Atlas. *(They whisper.)*
Cle. He dares not stand the shock.
Dion. I cannot blame him; there's danger in't. Every man in this age has not a soul of crystal, for all men to read their actions through: men's hearts and faces are so far asunder, that they hold no intelligence. Do but view yon stranger well, and you shall see a fever through all his bravery, and feel him shake like a true tenant. If he give not back his crown again upon the report of an elder-gun, I have no augury.
King. Go to;
Be more yourself, as you respect our favour;

You'll stir us else. Sir, I must have you know,
That y'are and shall be, at our pleasure, what
Fashion we will put upon you. Smooth your brow,
Or by the gods ——
  Phi. I am dead, sir; y'are my fate. It was not I
Said, I was wrong'd: I carry all about me
My weak stars lead me to, all my weak fortunes.
Who dares in all this presence speak, (that is
But man of flesh, and may be mortal,) tell me
I do not most entirely love this prince,
And honour his full virtues!
  King. Sure, he's possess'd.
  Phi. Yes, with my father's spirit. It's here, O King,
A dangerous spirit! Now he tells me, King,
I was a king's heir, bids me be a king,
And whispers to me, these are all my subjects.
'Tis strange he will not let me sleep, but dives
Into my fancy, and there gives me shapes
That kneel and do me service, cry me king.
But I'll suppress him; he's a factious spirit,
And will undo me. — [*To* Phar.] Noble sir, your hand;
I am your servant.
  King. Away! I do not like this:
I'll make you tamer, or I'll dispossess you
Both of your life and spirit. For this time
I pardon your wild speech, without so much
As your imprisonment.
(*Exeunt* King, Pharamond, Arethusa [*and Train*].)
  Dion. I thank you, sir; you dare not for the people.
  Gal. Ladies, what think you now of this brave fellow?

Meg. A pretty talking fellow, hot at hand. But eye yon stranger: is he not a fine complete gentleman? Oh, these strangers, I do affect them strangely! They do the rarest home-things, and please the fullest! As I live, I could love all the nation over and over for his sake.

Gal. Gods comfort your poor head-piece, lady! 'Tis a weak one, and had need of a nightcap. (*Exeunt Ladies.*)

  Dion. See, how his fancy labours! Has he not
Spoke home and bravely? What a dangerous train
Did he give fire to! How he shook the King,
Made his soul melt within him, and his blood
Run into whey! It stood upon his brow
Like a cold winter dew.
  Phi. Gentlemen,
You have no suit to me? I am no minion.
You stand, methinks, like men that would be courtiers,
If I could well be flatter'd at a price
Not to undo your children. You're all honest:
Go, get you home again, and make your country
A virtuous court, to which your great ones may,
In their diseased age, retire and live recluse.
  Cle. How do you, worthy sir?
  Phi. Well, very well;
And so well that, if the King please you, I find
I may live many years.
  Dion. The King must please,
Whilst we know what you are and who you are,
Your wrongs and virtues. Shrink not, worthy sir,
But add your father to you; in whose name
We'll waken all the gods, and conjure up
The rods of vengeance, the abused people,
Who, like to raging torrents, shall swell high,
And so begirt the dens of these male-dragons,
That, through the strongest safety, they shall beg
For mercy at your sword's point.
  Phi. Friends, no more;
Our ears may be corrupted; 'tis an age
We dare not trust our wills to. Do you love me?
  Thra. Do we love Heaven and Honour?
  Phi. My Lord Dion, you had
A virtuous gentlewoman call'd you father;
Is she yet alive?

Dion. Most honour'd sir, she is;
And, for the penance but of an idle dream
Has undertook a tedious pilgrimage.

(*Enter a Lady.*)

Phi. Is it to me, or any of these gentlemen, you come?
Lady. To you, brave lord; the princess would entreat
Your present company.
Phi. The princess send for me! You are mistaken.
Lady. If you be called Philaster, 'tis to you.
Phi. Kiss her fair hand, and say I will attend her. [*Exit Lady.*]
Dion. Do you know what you do?
Phi. Yes; go to see a woman.
Cle. But do you weigh the danger you are in?
Phi. Danger in a sweet face!
By Jupiter, I must not fear a woman!
Thra. But are you sure it was the princess sent?
It may be some foul train to catch your life.
Phi. I do not think it, gentlemen; she's noble.
Her eye may shoot me dead, or those true red
And white friends in her cheeks may steal my soul out;
There's all the danger in't. But, be what may,
Her single name hath arm'd me. (*Exit.*)
Dion. Go on
And be as truly happy as thou'rt fearless!—
Come, gentlemen, let's make our friends acquainted,
Lest the King prove false. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Arethusa *and a Lady.*)

Are. Comes he not?
Lady. Madam?
Are. Will Philaster come?
Lady. Dear madam, you were wont to credit me
At first.
Are. But didst thou tell me so?
I am forgetful, and my woman's strength
Is so o'ercharg'd with dangers like to grow
About my marriage, that these under-things
Dare not abide in such a troubled sea.
How lookt he when he told thee he would come?
Lady. Why, well.
Are. And not a little fearful?
Lady. Fear, madam! Sure, he knows not what it is.
Are. You all are of his faction; the whole court
Is bold in praise of him; whilst I
May live neglected, and do noble things,
As fools in strife throw gold into the sea,
Drown'd in the doing. But, I know he fears.
Lady. Fear, madam! Methought, his looks hid more
Of love than fear.
Are. Of love! To whom? To you?
Did you deliver those plain words I sent,
With such a winning gesture and quick look
That you have caught him?
Lady. Madam, I mean to you.
Are. Of love to me! Alas, thy ignorance
Lets thee not see the crosses of our births!
Nature, that loves not to be questioned
Why she did this or that, but has her ends,
And knows she does well, never gave the world
Two things so opposite, so contrary
As he and I am: if a bowl of blood
Drawn from this arm of mine would poison thee,
A draught of his would cure thee. Of love to me!
Lady. Madam, I think I hear him.
Are. Bring him in. [*Exit Lady.*]
You gods, that would not have your dooms withstood,
Whose holy wisdoms at this time it is
To make the passion of a feeble maid
The way unto your justice, I obey.

([*Re*]-*enter* [*Lady with*] Philaster.)

Lady. Here is my Lord Philaster.
Are. Oh, 'tis well.
Withdraw yourself. [*Exit Lady.*]
Phi. Madam, your messenger
Made me believe you wish'd to speak with me.

Are. 'Tis true, Philaster; but the words are such
I have to say, and do so ill beseem
The mouth of woman, that I wish them said,
And yet am loth to speak them. Have you known
That I have aught detracted from your worth?
Have I in person wrong'd you, or have set
My baser instruments to throw disgrace
Upon your virtues?
Phi. Never, madam, you.
Are. Why, then, should you, in such a public place,
Injure a princess, and a scandal lay
Upon my fortunes, fam'd to be so great,
Calling a great part of my dowry in question?
Phi. Madam, this truth which I shall speak will be
Foolish: but, for your fair and virtuous self,
I could afford myself to have no right
To any thing you wish'd.
Are. Philaster, know,
I must enjoy these kingdoms.
Phi. Madam, both?
Are. Both, or I die: by heaven, I die, Philaster,
If I not calmly may enjoy them both.
Phi. I would do much to save that noble life;
Yet would be loth to have posterity
Find in our stories, that Philaster gave
His right unto a sceptre and a crown
To save a lady's longing.
Are. Nay, then, hear:
I must and will have them, and more ——
Phi. What more?
Are. Or lose that little life the gods prepared
To trouble this poor piece of earth withal.
Phi. Madam, what more?
Are. Turn, then, away thy face.
Phi. No.
Are. Do.
Phi. I can endure it. Turn away my face!
I never yet saw enemy that lookt
So dreadfully, but that I thought myself
As great a basilisk as he; or spake
So horrible, but that I thought my tongue
Bore thunder underneath, as much as his;
Nor beast that I could turn from. Shall I then
Begin to fear sweet sounds? A lady's voice,
Whom I do love? Say you would have my life;
Why, I will give it you; for 'tis of me
A thing so loath'd, and unto you that ask
Of so poor use, that I shall make no price:
If you entreat, I will unmov'dly hear.
Are. Yet, for my sake, a little bend thy looks.
Phi. I do.
Are. Then know, I must have them and thee.
Phi. And me?
Are. Thy love; without which, all the land
Discovered yet will serve me for no use
But to be buried in.
Phi. Is't possible?
Are. With it, it were too little to bestow
On thee. Now, though thy breath do strike me dead,
(Which, know, it may,) I have unript my breast.
Phi. Madam, you are too full of noble thoughts,
To lay a train for this contemned life,
Which you may have for asking. To suspect
Were base, where I deserve no ill. Love you!
By all my hopes, I do, above my life!
But how this passion should proceed from you
So violently, would amaze a man
That would be jealous.
Are. Another soul into my body shot
Could not have fill'd me with more strength and spirit
Than this thy breath. But spend not hasty time
In seeking how I came thus: 'tis the gods,
The gods, that make me so; and, sure, our love
Will be the nobler and the better blest,
In that the secret justice of the gods
Is mingled with it. Let us leave, and kiss;
Lest some unwelcome guest should fall betwixt us,

And we should part without it.
Phi. ’Twill be ill
I should abide here long.
Are. ’Tis true; and worse
You should come often. How shall we devise
To hold intelligence, that our true loves,
On any new occasion, may agree
What path is best to tread?
Phi. I have a boy,
Sent by the gods, I hope, to this intent,
Not yet seen in the court. Hunting the buck,
I found him sitting by a fountain’s side,
Of which he borrow’d some to quench his thirst,
And paid the nymph again as much in tears.
A garland lay him by, made by himself
Of many several flowers bred in the vale,
Stuck in that mystic order that the rareness
Delighted me: but ever when he turn’d
His tender eyes upon ’em, he would weep,
As if he meant to make ’em grow again.
Seeing such pretty helpless innocence
Dwell in his face, I ask’d him all his story.
He told me that his parents gentle died,
Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,
Which gave him roots; and of the crystal springs,
Which did not stop their courses; and the sun,
Which still, he thank’d him, yielded him his light.
Then took he up his garland, and did show
What every flower, as country-people hold,
Did signify, and how all, ordered thus,
Exprest his grief; and, to my thoughts, did read
The prettiest lecture of his country-art
That could be wisht: so that methought I could
Have studied it. I gladly entertain’d
Him, who was glad to follow; and have got
The trustiest, loving’st, and the gentlest boy
That ever master kept. Him will I send
To wait on you, and bear our hidden love.
Are. ’Tis well; no more.

(Re-enter Lady.)

Lady. Madam, the prince is come to do his service.
Are. What will you do, Philaster, with yourself?
Phi. Why, that which all the gods have pointed out for me.
Are. Dear, hide thyself. —
Bring in the prince. [*Exit Lady.*]
Phi. Hide me from Pharamond!
When thunder speaks, which is the voice of God,
Though I do reverence, yet I hide me not;
And shall a stranger-prince have leave to brag
Unto a foreign nation, that he made
Philaster hide himself?
Are. He cannot know it.
Phi. Though it should sleep for ever to the world,
It is a simple sin to hide myself,
Which will for ever on my conscience lie.
Are. Then, good Philaster, give him scope and way
In what he says; for he is apt to speak
What you are loth to hear. For my sake, do.
Phi. I will.

([*Re*]-*enter* [*Lady with*] Pharamond.)

Pha. My princely mistress, as true lovers ought, [*Exit Lady.*]
I come to kiss these fair hands, and to show,
In outward ceremonies, the dear love
Writ in my heart.
Phi. If I shall have an answer no directlier,
I am gone.
Pha. To what would he have answer?
Are. To his claim unto the kingdom.
Pha. Sirrah, I forbare you before the King —
Phi. Good sir, do so still; I would not talk with you.
Pha. But now the time is fitter. Do but offer
To make mention of right to any kingdom,
Though it be scarce habitable ——
Phi. Good sir, let me go.

Pha. And by the gods —
Phi. Peace, Pharamond! if thou ——
Are. Leave us, Philaster.
Phi. I have done. [*Going.*]
Pha. You are gone! by Heaven I'll fetch you back.
Phi. You shall not need. [*Returning.*]
Pha. What now?
Phi. Know, Pharamond,
I loathe to brawl with such a blast as thou,
Who are nought but a valiant voice; but if
Thou shalt provoke me further, men shall say,
Thou wert, and not lament it.
Pha. Do you slight
My greatness so, and in the chamber of
The princess?
Phi. It is a place to which I must confess
I owe a reverence; but were't the church,
Ay, at the altar, there's no place so safe,
Where thou dar'st injure me, but I dare kill thee.
And for your greatness, know, sir, I can grasp
You and your greatness thus, thus into nothing.
Give not a word, not a word back! Farewell. (*Exit.*)
Pha. 'Tis an odd fellow, madam; we must stop
His mouth with some office when we are married.
Are. You were best make him your controller.
Pha. I think he would discharge it well. But, madam,
I hope our hearts are knit; but yet so slow
The ceremonies of state are, that 'twill be long
Before our hands be so. If then you please,
Being agreed in heart, let us not wait
For dreaming form, but take a little stolen
Delights, and so prevent our joys to come.
Are. If you dare speak such thoughts,
I must withdraw in honour. (*Exit.*)

Pha. The constitution of my body will never hold out till the wedding; I must seek elsewhere. (*Exit.*)

ACT II.

Scene I.

(*Enter* Philaster *and* Bellario.)

Phi. And thou shalt find her honourable, boy;
Full of regard unto thy tender youth,
For thine own modesty; and, for my sake,
Apter to give than thou wilt be to ask,
Ay, or deserve.
Bel. Sir, you did take me up
When I was nothing; and only yet am something
By being yours. You trusted me unknown;
And that which you were apt to conster
A simple innocence in me, perhaps
Might have been craft, the cunning of a boy
Hard'ned in lies and theft: yet ventur'd you
To part my miseries and me: for which,
I never can expect to serve a lady
That bears more honour in her breast than you.
Phi. But, boy, it will prefer thee. Thou art young,
And bear'st a childish overflowing love
To them that clap thy cheeks and speak thee fair yet;
But when thy judgment comes to rule those passions,
Thou wilt remember best those careful friends
That plac'd thee in the noblest way of life.
She is a princess I prefer thee to.
Bel. In that small time that I have seen the world,
I never knew a man hasty to part
With a servant he thought trusty. I remember,
My father would prefer the boys he kept
To greater men than he; but did it not
Till they were grown too saucy for himself.
Phi. Why, gentle boy, I find no fault at all
In thy behaviour.
Bel. Sir, if I have made
A fault in ignorance, instruct my youth:
I shall be willing, if not apt, to learn;
Age and experience will adorn my mind
With larger knowledge; and if I have done
A wilful fault, think me not past all hope

For once. What master holds so strict a hand
Over his boy, that he will part with him
Without one warning? Let me be corrected
To break my stubbornness, if it be so,
Rather than turn me off; and I shall mend.
Phi. Thy love doth plead so prettily to stay,
That, trust me, I could weep to part with thee.
Alas, I do not turn thee off! Thou knowest
It is my business that doth call thee hence;
And when thou art with her, thou dwell'st with me,
Think so, and 'tis so; and when time is full,
That thou hast well discharg'd this heavy trust,
Laid on so weak a one, I will again
With joy receive thee; as I live, I will!
Nay, weep not, gentle boy. 'Tis more than time
Thou didst attend the princess.
Bel. I am gone.
But since I am to part with you, my lord,
And none knows whether I shall live to do
More service for you, take this little prayer:
Heaven bless your loves, your fights, all your designs!
May sick men, if they have your wish, be well;
And Heaven hate those you curse, though I be one! (*Exit.*)
Phi. The love of boys unto their lords is strange;
I have read wonders of it: yet this boy
For my sake (if a man may judge by looks
And speech) would out-do story. I may see
A day to pay him for his loyalty. (*Exit.*)

[SCENE II.]

(*Enter* PHARAMOND.)

Pha. Why should these ladies stay so long? They must come this way. I know the queen employs 'em not; for the reverend mother sent me word, they would all be for the garden. If they should all prove honest now, I were in a fair taking; I was never so long without sport in my life, and, in my conscience, 'tis not my fault. Oh, for our country ladies!

(*Enter* GALATEA.)

Here's one bolted; I'll hound at her. — Madam!
Gal. Your grace!
Pha. Shall I not be a trouble?
Gal. Not to me, sir.
Pha. Nay, nay, you are too quick. By this sweet hand ——
Gal. You'll be forsworn, sir; 'tis but an old glove.
If you will talk at distance, I am for you:
But, good prince, be not bawdy, nor do not brag;
These two I bar;
And then, I think, I shall have sense enough
To answer all the weighty apophthegms
Your royal blood shall manage.
Pha. Dear lady, can you love?

Gal. Dear prince! how dear? I ne'er cost you a coach yet, nor put you to the dear repentance of a banquet. Here's no scarlet, sir, to blush the sin out it was given for. This wire mine own hair covers; and this face has been so far from being dear to any, that it ne'er cost penny painting; and, for the rest of my poor wardrobe, such as you see, it leaves no hand behind it, to make the jealous mercer's wife curse our good doings.

Pha. You mistake me, lady.
Gal. Lord, I do so; would you or I could help it!
[Pha. You're very dangerous bitter, like a potion.
Gal. No, sir, I do not mean to purge you, though
I mean to purge a little time on you.]
Pha. Do ladies of this country use to give
No more respect to men of my full being?

Gal. Full being! I understand you not, unless your grace means growing to fatness; and then your only remedy (upon my knowledge, prince) is, in a morning, a cup of neat white wine brewed with carduus, then fast till supper; about eight you may eat; use exercise, and keep a sparrow-hawk; you can shoot in a tiller: but, of all, your grace must fly phlebotomy, fresh pork, conger, and clarified whey; they are all duller of the vital spirits.

Pha. Lady, you talk of nothing all this while.
Gal. 'Tis very true, sir; I talk of you.

Pha. [*aside*]. This is a crafty wench; I like her wit well; 'twill be rare to stir up a leaden appetite. She's a Danaë, and must be courted in a shower of gold. — Madam, look here; all these, and more than ——

Gal. What have you there, my lord? Gold! now, as I live, 'tis fair gold! You would have silver for it, to play with the pages. You could not have taken me in a worse time; but, if you have present use, my lord, I'll send my man with silver and keep your gold for you.

Pha. Lady, lady!
Gal. She's coming, sir, behind, will take white money. —
[*Aside.*] Yet for all this I'll match ye.
(*Exit behind the hangings.*)

Pha. If there be but two such more in this kingdom, and near the court, we may even hang up our harps. Ten such camphire constitutions as this would call the golden age again in question, and teach the old way for every ill-fac'd husband to get his own children; and what a mischief that would breed, let all consider!

(*Enter* Megra.)

Here's another: if she be of the same last, the devil shall pluck her on. — Many fair mornings, lady!

Meg. As many mornings bring as many days,
Fair, sweet, and hopeful to your grace!
Pha. [*aside*]. She gives good words yet; sure this wench is free. —
If your more serious business do not call you,
Let me hold quarter with you; we will talk
An hour out quickly.
Meg. What would your grace talk of?
Pha. Of some such pretty subject as yourself:
I'll go no further than your eye, or lip;
There's theme enough for one man for an age.
Meg. Sir, they stand right, and my lips are yet even,
Smooth, young enough, ripe enough, and red enough,
Or my glass wrongs me.
Pha. Oh, they are two twinn'd cherries dy'd in blushes
Which those fair suns above with their bright beams
Reflect upon and ripen. Sweetest beauty,
Bow down those branches, that the longing taste
Of the faint looker-on may meet those blessings,
And taste and live. (*They kiss.*)
Meg. [*aside.*] Oh, delicate sweet prince!
She that hath snow enough about her heart
To take the wanton spring of ten such lines off,
May be a nun without probation. — Sir,
You have in such neat poetry gathered a kiss,
That if I had but five lines of that number,
Such pretty begging blanks, I should commend
Your forehead or your cheeks, and kiss you too.
Pha. Do it in prose; you cannot miss it, madam.
Meg. I shall, I shall.
Pha. By my life, but you shall not;
I'll prompt you first. [*Kisses her.*] Can you do it now?
Meg. Methinks 'tis easy, now you ha' done't before me;
But yet I should stick at it. [*Kisses him.*]
Pha. Stick till to-morrow;
I'll ne'er part you, sweetest. But we lose time:
Can you love me?
Meg. Love you, my lord! How would you have me love you?

Pha. I'll teach you in a short sentence, 'cause I will not load your memory; this is all: love me, and lie with me.

Meg. Was it "lie with you" that you said? 'Tis impossible.

Pha. Not to a willing mind, that will endeavour. If I do not teach you to do it as easily in one night as you'll go to bed, I'll lose my royal blood for't.

Meg. Why, prince, you have a lady of your own
That yet wants teaching.

Pha. I'll sooner teach a mare the old measures than teach her anything belonging to the function. She's afraid to lie with herself if she have but any masculine imaginations about her. I know, when we are married, I must ravish her.

Meg. By mine honour, that's a foul fault, indeed;
But time and your good help will wear it out, sir.

Pha. And for any other I see, excepting your dear self, dearest lady, I had rather be Sir Tim the schoolmaster, and leap a dairy-maid, madam.

Meg. Has your grace seen the court-star, Galatea?

Pha. Out upon her! She's as cold of her favour as an apoplex; she sail'd by but now.

Meg. And how do you hold her wit, sir?

Pha. I hold her wit? The strength of all the guard cannot hold it, if they were tied to it; she would blow 'em out of the kingdom. They talk of Jupiter; he's but a squib-cracker to her: look well about you, and you may find a tongue-bolt. But speak, sweet lady, shall I be freely welcome.

Meg. Whither?

Pha. To your bed. If you mistrust my faith, you do me the unnoblest wrong.

Meg. I dare not, prince, I dare not.

Pha. Make your own conditions, my purse shall seal 'em, and what you dare imagine you can want, I'll furnish you withal. Give two hours to your thoughts every morning about it. Come I know you are bashful;
Speak in my ear, will you be mine? Keep this,
And with it, me: soon I will visit you.

Meg. My lord, my chamber's most unsafe; but when 'tis night,
I'll find some means to slip into your lodging;
Till when ——

Pha. Till when, this and my heart go with thee!

(Exeunt several ways.)

(Re-enter Galatea *from behind the hangings.)*

Gal. Oh, thou pernicious petticoat prince! are these your virtues? Well, if I do not lay a train to blow your sport up, I am no woman: and, Lady Towsabel, I'll fit you for't. *(Exit.)*

[Scene III.]

(Enter Arethusa *and a Lady.)*

Are. Where's the boy?

Lady. Within, madam.

Are. Gave you him gold to buy him clothes?

Lady. I did.

Are. And has he done't?

Lady. Yes, madam.

Are. 'Tis a pretty sad-talking boy, is it not? Asked you his name?

Lady. No, madam.

(Enter Galatea.)

Are. Oh, you are welcome. What good news?

Gal. As good as any one can tell your grace,
That says she has done that you would have wish'd.

Are. Hast thou discovered?

Gal. I have strain'd a point of modesty for you.

Are. I prithee, how?

Gal. In list'ning after bawdry. I see, let a lady live never so modestly, she shall be sure to find a lawful time to hearken after bawdry. Your prince, brave Pharamond, was so hot on't!

Are. With whom?

Gal. Why, with the lady I suspected. I can tell the time and place.

Are. Oh, when, and where?

Gal. To-night, his lodging.

Are. Run thyself into the presence; mingle there again
With other ladies; leave the rest to me.

[*Exit* Galatea.]

If destiny (to whom we dare not say,
"Why didst thou this?") have not decreed it so,
In lasting leaves (whose smallest characters
Were never alter'd yet), this match shall break. —
Where's the boy?

Lady. Here, madam.

(*Enter* Bellario.)

Are. Sir, you are sad to change your service; is't not so?
Bel. Madam, I have not chang'd; I wait on you,
To do him service.
Are. Thou disclaim'st in me.
Tell me thy name.
Bel. Bellario.
Are. Thou canst sing and play?
Bel. If grief will give me leave, madam, I can.
Are. Alas, what kind of grief can thy years know?
Hadst thou a curst master when thou went'st to school?
Thou art not capable of other grief;
Thy brows and cheeks are smooth as waters be
When no breath troubles them. Believe me, boy,
Care seeks out wrinkled brows and hollow eyes,
And builds himself caves, to abide in them.
Come, sir, tell me truly, doth your lord love me?
Bel. Love, madam! I know not what it is.
Are. Canst thou know grief, and never yet knew'st love?
Thou art deceiv'd, boy. Does he speak of me
As if he wish'd me well?
Bel. If it be love
To forget all respect of his own friends
With thinking of your face; if it be love
To sit cross-arm'd and sigh away the day,
Mingled with starts, crying your name as loud
And hastily as men i' the streets do fire;
If it be love to weep himself away
When he but hears of any lady dead
Or kill'd, because it might have been your chance;
If, when he goes to rest (which will not be),
'Twixt every prayer he says, to name you once,
As others drop a bead, be to be in love,
Then, madam, I dare swear he loves you.
Are. Oh, you're a cunning boy, and taught to lie
For your lord's credit! But thou know'st a lie
That bears this sound is welcomer to me
Than any truth that says he loves me not.
Lead the way, boy. — [*To Lady.*] Do you attend me too. —
'Tis thy lord's business hastes me thus. Away! (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene IV.]

(*Enter* Dion, Cleremont, Thrasiline, Megra, *and* Galatea.)

Dion. Come, ladies, shall we talk a round? As men
Do walk a mile, women should talk an hour
After supper: 'tis their exercise.
Gal. 'Tis late.
Meg. 'Tis all
My eyes will do to lead me to my bed.
Gal. I fear, they are so heavy, you'll scarce find
The way to your own lodging with 'em to-night.

(*Enter* Pharamond.)

Thra. The prince!
Pha. Not a-bed, ladies? You're good sitters-up.
What think you of a pleasant dream, to last
Till morning?
Meg. I should choose, my lord, a pleasing wake before it.

(*Enter* Arethusa *and* Bellario.)

Are. 'Tis well, my lord; you're courting of these ladies. —
Is't not late, gentlemen?
Cle. Yes, madam.
Are. Wait you there. (*Exit.*)
Meg. [*aside*]. She's jealous, as I live. — Look you, my lord,
The princess has a Hylas, an Adonis.
Pha. His form is angel-like.
Meg. Why, this is he that must, when you are wed,
Sit by your pillow, like young Apollo, with
His hand and voice binding your thoughts in sleep;
The princess does provide him for you and for herself.

PHA. I find no music in these boys.
MEG. Nor I:
They can do little, and that small they do,
They have not wit to hide.
DION. Serves he the princess?
THRA. Yes.
DION. 'Tis a sweet boy: how brave she keeps him!
PHA. Ladies all, good rest; I mean to kill a buck
To-morrow morning ere you've done your dreams.
MEG. All happiness attend your grace! [*Exit* PHARAMOND.] Gentlemen, good rest. —
Come, shall we go to bed?
GAL. Yes. — All good night.
DION. May your dreams be true to you!
(*Exeunt* GALATEA *and* MEGRA.)
What shall we do, gallants? 'tis late. The King
Is up still: see, he comes; a guard along
With him.

(*Enter* KING, ARETHUSA, *and* Guard.)

KING. Look your intelligence be true.
ARE. Upon my life, it is; and I do hope
Your highness will not tie me to a man
That in the heat of wooing throws me off,
And takes another.
DION. What should this mean?
KING. If it be true,
That lady had been better have embrac'd
Cureless diseases. Get you to your rest:
You shall be righted.
(*Exeunt* ARETHUSA *and* BELLARIO.)
— Gentlemen, draw near;
We shall employ you. Is young Pharamond
Come to his lodging?
DION. I saw him enter there.
KING. Haste, some of you, and cunningly discover
If Megra be in her lodging. [*Exit* DION.]
CLE. Sir,
She parted hence but now, with other ladies.
KING. If she be there, we shall not need to make
A vain discovery of our suspicion.
[*Aside.*] You gods, I see that who unrighteously
Holds wealth or state from others shall be curst
In that which meaner men are blest withal:
Ages to come shall know no male of him
Left to inherit, and his name shall be
Blotted from earth; if he have any child,
It shall be crossly match'd; the gods themselves
Shall sow wild strife betwixt her lord and her.
Yet, if it be your wills, forgive the sin
I have committed; let it not fall
Upon this understanding child of mine!
She has not broke your laws. But how can I
Look to be heard of gods that must be just,
Praying upon the ground I hold by wrong?

(*Re-enter* DION.)

DION. Sir, I have asked, and her women swear she is within; but they, I think, are bawds. I told 'em, I must speak with her; they laught, and said, their lady lay speechless. I said, my business was important; they said, their lady was about it. I grew hot, and cried, my business was a matter that concern'd life and death; they answered, so was sleeping, at which their lady was. I urg'd again, she had scarce time to be so since last I saw her: they smil'd again, and seem'd to instruct me that sleeping was nothing but lying down and winking. Answers more direct I could not get: in short, sir, I think she is not there.

KING. 'Tis then no time to dally. — You o' the guard,
Wait at the back door of the prince's lodging,
And see that none pass thence, upon your lives. [*Exeunt Guards.*]
Knock, gentlemen; knock loud; louder yet.
[DION, CLER., *&c. knock at the door of* PHARAMOND'S *lodging.*]
What, has their pleasure taken off their hearing? —
I'll break your meditations. — Knock again. —
Not yet? I do not think he sleeps, having this
Larum by him. — Once more. — Pharamond! prince!

(PHARAMOND [*appears*] *above*.)

PHA. What saucy groom knocks at this dead of night?
Where be our waiters? By my vexed soul,
He meets his death that meets me, for his boldness.
KING. Prince, prince, you wrong your thoughts; we are your friends:
Come down.
PHA. The King!
KING. The same, sir. Come down, sir:
We have cause of present counsel with you.
PHA. If your grace please
To use me, I'll attend you to your chamber.

(*Enter* PHARAMOND *below*.)

KING. No, 'tis too late, prince; I'll make bold with yours.
PHA. I have some private reasons to myself
Makes me unmannerly, and say you cannot. — (*They press to come in.*)
Nay, press not forward, gentlemen; he must
Come through my life that comes here.
KING. Sir, be resolv'd I must and will come. — Enter.
PHA. I will not be dishonour'd.
He that enters, enters upon his death.
Sir, 'tis a sign you make no stranger of me,
To bring these renegadoes to my chamber
At these unseasoned hours.
KING. Why do you
Chafe yourself so? You are not wrong'd nor shall be;
Only I'll search your lodging, for some cause
To ourself known. — Enter, I say.
PHA. I say, no.

(*Enter* MEGRA *above*.)

MEG. Let 'em enter, prince, let 'em enter;
I am up and ready: I know their business;
'Tis the poor breaking of a lady's honour
They hunt so hotly after; let 'em enjoy it. —
You have your business, gentlemen; I lay here.
Oh, my lord the King, this is not noble in you
To make public the weakness of a woman!
KING. Come down.
MEG. I dare, my lord. Your hootings and your clamours,
Your private whispers and your broad fleerings,
Can no more vex my soul than this base carriage.
But I have vengeance yet in store for some
Shall, in the most contempt you can have of me,
Be joy and nourishment.
KING. Will you come down?
MEG. Yes, to laugh at your worst; but I shall wring you,
If my skill fail me not. [*Exit above.*]
KING. Sir, I must dearly chide you for this looseness;
You have wrong'd a worthy lady; but, no more. —
Conduct him to my lodging and to bed.
[*Exeunt* PHARAMOND *and Attendants.*]
CLE. Get him another wench, and you bring him to bed indeed.
DION. 'Tis strange a man cannot ride a stage
Or two, to breathe himself, without a warrant.
If his gear hold, that lodgings be search'd thus,
Pray God we may lie with our own wives in safety,
That they be not by some trick of state mistaken!

(*Enter* [*Attendants*] *with* MEGRA [*below*].)

KING. Now, lady of honour, where's your honour now?
No man can fit your palate but the prince.
Thou most ill-shrouded rottenness, thou piece
Made by a painter and a 'pothecary,
Thou troubled sea of lust, thou wilderness
Inhabited by wild thoughts, thou swoln cloud
Of infection, thou ripe mine of all diseases,
Thou all-sin, all-hell, and last, all-devils, tell me,
Had you none to pull on with your courtesies
But he that must be mine, and wrong my daughter?

By all the gods, all these, and all the pages,
And all the court, shall hoot thee through the court,
Fling rotten oranges, make ribald rhymes,
And sear thy name with candles upon walls!
Do you laugh, Lady Venus?
Meg. Faith, sir, you must pardon me;
I cannot choose but laugh to see you merry.
If you do this, O King! nay, if you dare do it,
By all those gods you swore by, and as many
More of my own, I will have fellows, and such
Fellows in it, as shall make noble mirth!
The princess, your dear daughter, shall stand by me
On walls, and sung in ballads, any thing.
Urge me no more; I know her and her haunts,
Her lays, leaps, and outlays, and will discover all;
Nay, will dishonour her. I know the boy
She keeps; a handsome boy, about eighteen;
Know what she does with him, where, and when.
Come, sir, you put me to a woman's madness,
The glory of a fury; and if I do not
Do't to the height ——
King. What boy is this she raves at?
Meg. Alas! good-minded prince, you know not these things!
I am loth to reveal 'em. Keep this fault,
As you would keep your health from the hot air
Of the corrupted people, or, by Heaven,
I will not fall alone. What I have known
Shall be as public as a print; all tongues
Shall speak it as they do the language they
Are born in, as free and commonly; I'll set it,
Like a prodigious star, for all to gaze at,
And so high and glowing, that other kingdoms far and foreign
Shall read it there, nay, travel with it, till they find
No tongue to make it more, nor no more people;
And then behold the fall of your fair princess!
King. Has she a boy?
Cle. So please your grace, I have seen a boy wait
On her, a fair boy.
King. Go, get you to your quarter:
For this time I will study to forget you.
Meg. Do you study to forget me, and I'll study
To forget you.
(*Exeunt* King, Megra, *and Guard.*)

Cle. Why, here's a male spirit fit for Hercules. If ever there be Nine Worthies of women, this wench shall ride astride and be their captain.

Dion. Sure, she has a garrison of devils in her tongue, she uttered such balls of wild-fire. She has so nettled the King, that all the doctors in the country will scarce cure him. That boy was a strange-found-out antidote to cure her infection; that boy, that princess' boy; that brave, chaste, virtuous lady's boy; and a fair boy, a well-spoken boy! All these considered, can make nothing else — but there I leave you, gentlemen.

Thra. Nay, we'll go wander with you.
(*Exeunt.*)

ACT III.

Scene I.

(*Enter* Dion, Cleremont, *and* Thrasiline.)

Cle. Nay, doubtless, 'tis true.
Dion. Ay; and 'tis the gods
That rais'd this punishment, to scourge the King
With his own issue. Is it not a shame
For us that should write noble in the land,
For us that should be freemen, to behold
A man that is the bravery of his age,
Philaster, prest down from his royal right
By this regardless King? and only look
And see the sceptre ready to be cast
Into the hands of that lascivious lady
That lives in lust with a smooth boy, now to be married
To you strange prince, who, but that people please
To let him be a prince, is born a slave

In that which should be his most noble part,
His mind?
THRA. That man that would not stir with you
To aid Philaster, let the gods forget
That such a creature walks upon the earth!
CLE. Philaster is too backward in't himself.
The gentry do await it, and the people,
Against their nature, are all bent for him,
And like a field of standing corn, that's moved
With a stiff gale, their heads bow all one way.
DION. The only cause that draws Philaster back
From this attempt is the fair princess' love,
Which he admires, and we can now confute.
THRA. Perhaps he'll not believe it.
DION. Why, gentlemen, 'tis without question so.
CLE. Ay, 'tis past speech she lives dishonestly.
But how shall we, if he be curious, work
Upon his faith?
THRA. We all are satisfied within ourselves.
DION. Since it is true, and tends to his own good,
I'll make this new report to be my knowledge;
I'll say I know it; nay, I'll swear I saw it.
CLE. It will be best.
THRA. 'Twill move him.

(*Enter* PHILASTER.)

DION. Here he comes.
Good morrow to your honour: we have spent
Some time in seeking you.
PHI. My worthy friends,
You that can keep your memories to know
Your friend in miseries, and cannot frown
On men disgrac'd for virtue, a good day
Attend you all! What service may I do
Worthy your acceptation?
DION. My good lord,
We come to urge that virtue, which we know
Lives in your breast, forth. Rise, and make a head;
The nobles and the people are all dull'd
With this usurping king; and not a man,
That ever heard the word, or knew such a thing
As virtue, but will second your attempts.
PHI. How honourable is this love in you
To me that have deserv'd none! Know, my friends,
(You, that were born to shame your poor Philaster
With too much courtesy,) I could afford
To melt myself in thanks: but my designs
Are not yet ripe. Suffice it, that ere long
I shall employ your loves; but yet the time
Is short of what I would.
DION. The time is fuller, sir, than you expect;
That which hereafter will not, perhaps, be reach'd
By violence, may now be caught. As for the King,
You know the people have long hated him;
But now the princess, whom they lov'd ——
PHI. Why, what of her?
DION. Is loath'd as much as he.
PHI. By what strange means?
DION. She's known a whore.
PHI. Thou liest.
DION. My lord ——
PHI. Thou liest,
(*Offers to draw and is held.*)
And thou shalt feel it! I had thought thy mind
Had been of honour. Thus to rob a lady
Of her good name is an infectious sin
Not to be pardon'd. Be it false as hell,
'Twill never be redeem'd, if it be sown
Amongst the people, fruitful to increase
All evil they shall hear. Let me alone
That I may cut off falsehood whilst it springs!
Set hills on hills betwixt me and the man
That utters this, and I will scale them all,
And from the utmost top fall on his neck,
Like thunder from a cloud.
DION. This is most strange:
Sure, he does love her.
PHI. I do love fair truth.
She is my mistress, and who injures her

Draws vengeance from me. Sirs, let go my arms.
Thra. Nay, good my lord, be patient.
Cle. Sir, remember this is your honour'd friend,
That comes to do his service, and will show you
Why he utter'd this.
Phi. I ask your pardon, sir;
My zeal to truth made me unmannerly:
Should I have heard dishonour spoke of you,
Behind your back, untruly, I had been
As much distemper'd and enrag'd as now.
Dion. But this, my lord, is truth.
Phi. Oh, say not so!
Good sir, forbear to say so: 'tis then truth,
That womankind is false: urge it no more;
It is impossible. Why should you think
The princess light?
Dion. Why, she was taken at it.
Phi. 'Tis false! by Heaven, 'tis false! It cannot be!
Can it? Speak, gentlemen; for God's love, speak!
Is't possible? Can women all be damn'd?
Dion. Why, no, my lord.
Phi. Why, then, it cannot be.
Dion. And she was taken with her boy.
Phi. What boy?
Dion. A page, a boy that serves her.
Phi. Oh, good gods!
A little boy?
Dion. Ay; know you him, my lord?
Phi. [*aside*]. Hell and sin know him!—Sir, you are deceiv'd;
I'll reason it a little coldly with you.
If she were lustful, would she take a boy,
That knows not yet desire? She would have one
Should meet her thoughts and know the sin he acts,
Which is the great delight of wickedness.
You are abus'd, and so is she, and I.
Dion. How you, my lord?
Phi. Why, all the world's abus'd
In an unjust report.
Dion. Oh, noble sir, your virtues
Cannot look into the subtle thoughts of woman!
In short, my lord, I took them; I myself.
Phi. Now, all the devils, thou didst! Fly from my rage!
Would thou hadst ta'en devils engend'ring plagues,
When thou did'st take them! Hide thee from mine eyes!
Would thou hadst taken thunder on thy breast,
When thou didst take them; or been strucken dumb
For ever; that this foul deed might have slept
In silence!
Thra. Have you known him so ill-temper'd?
Cle. Never before.
Phi. The winds that are let loose
From the four several corners of the earth,
And spread themselves all over sea and land,
Kiss not a chaste one. What friend bears a sword
To run me thorough?
Dion. Why, my lord, are you
So mov'd at this?
Phi. When any fall from virtue,
I am distract; I have an interest in't.
Dion. But, good my lord, recall yourself, and think
What's best to be done.
Phi. I thank you; I will do it.
Please you to leave me; I'll consider of it.
To-morrow I will find your lodging forth,
And give you answer.
Dion. All the gods direct you
The readiest way!
Thra. He was extreme impatient.
Cle. It was his virtue and his noble mind.
(*Exeunt* Dion, Cleremont, *and* Thrasiline.)
Phi. I had forgot to ask him where he took them;
I'll follow him. Oh that I had a sea
Within my breast, to quench the fire I feel!
More circumstances will but fan this fire:
It more afflicts me now, to know by whom
This deed is done, than simply that 'tis done;
And he that tells me this is honourable,
As far from lies as she is far from truth.

Oh, that, like beasts, we could not grieve ourselves
With that we see not! Bulls and rams will fight
To keep their females standing in their sight;
But take 'em from them, and you take at once
Their spleens away; and they will fall again
Unto their pastures, growing fresh and fat,
And taste the waters of the springs as sweet
As 'twas before, finding no start in sleep;
But miserable man ——

(*Enter* Bellario.)

See, see, you gods,
He walks still; and the face you let him wear
When he was innocent is still the same,
Not blasted! Is this justice? Do you mean
To intrap mortality, that you allow
Treason so smooth a brow? I cannot now
Think he is guilty.
Bel. Health to you, my lord!
The princess doth commend her love, her life,
And this, unto you. (*Gives a letter.*)
Phi. Oh, Bellario,
Now I perceive she loves me: she does show it
In loving thee, my boy, she has made thee brave.
Bel. My lord, she has attir'd me past my wish,
Past my desert; more fit for her attendant,
Though far unfit for me who do attend.
Phi. Thou art grown courtly, boy. — Oh, let all women,
That love black deeds, learn to dissemble here,
Here, by this paper! She does write to me
As if her heart were mines of adamant
To all the world besides; but, unto me,
A maiden-snow that melted with my looks. —
Tell me, my boy, how doth the princess use thee?
For I shall guess her love to me by that.
Bel. Scarce like her servant, but as if I were,
Something allied to her, or had preserv'd
Her life three times by my fidelity;
As mothers fond do use their only sons,
As I'd use one that's left unto my trust,
For whom my life should pay if he met harm,
So she does use me.
Phi. Why, this is wondrous well:
But what kind language does she feed thee with?
Bel. Why, she does tell me she will trust my youth
With all her loving secrets, and does call me
Her pretty servant; bids me weep no more
For leaving you; she'll see my services
Regarded: and such words of that soft strain
That I am nearer weeping when she ends
Than ere she spake.
Phi. This is much better still.
Bel. Are you not ill, my lord?
Phi. Ill? No, Bellario.
Bel. Methinks your words
Fall not from off your tongue so evenly,
Nor is there in your looks that quietness
That I was wont to see.
Phi. Thou art deceiv'd, boy:
And she strokes thy head?
Bel. Yes.
Phi. And she does clap thy cheeks?
Bel. She does, my lord.
Phi. And she does kiss thee, boy? ha!
Bel. How, my lord?
Phi. She kisses thee?
Bel. Never, my lord, by heaven.
Phi. That's strange, I know she does.
Bel. No, by my life.
Phi. Why then she does not love me. Come, she does.
I bade her do it; I charg'd her, by all charms
Of love between us, by the hope of peace
We should enjoy, to yield thee all delights
Naked as to her bed: I took her oath
Thou shouldst enjoy her. Tell me, gentle boy,
Is she not parallelless? Is not her breath
Sweet as Arabian winds when fruits are ripe?
Are not her breasts two liquid ivory balls?
Is she not all a lasting mine of joy?

Bel. Ay, now I see why my disturbed thoughts
Were so perplex'd. When first I went to her,
My heart held augury. You are abus'd;
Some villain has abus'd you; I do see
Whereto you tend. Fall rocks upon his head
That put this to you! 'Tis some subtle train
To bring that noble frame of yours to nought.
Phi. Thou think'st I will be angry with thee. Come,
Thou shalt know all my drift. I hate her more
Than I love happiness, and plac'd thee there
To pry with narrow eyes into her deeds.
Hast thou discovered? Is she fallen to lust,
As I would wish her? Speak some comfort to me.
Bel. My lord, you did mistake the boy you sent.
Had she the lust of sparrows or of goats,
Had she a sin that way, hid from the world,
Beyond the name of lust, I would not aid
Her base desires; but what I came to know
As servant to her, I would not reveal,
To make my life last ages.
Phi. Oh, my heart!
This is a salve worse than the main disease. —
Tell me thy thoughts; for I will know the least
That dwells within thee, or will rip thy heart
To know it. I will see thy thoughts as plain
As I do now thy face.
Bel. Why, sc you do.
She is (for aught I know) by all the gods,
As chaste as ice! But were she foul as hell,
And I did know it thus, the breath of kings,
The points of swords, tortures, nor bulls of brass,
Should draw it from me.
Phi. Then it is no time
To dally with thee; I will take thy life,
For I do hate thee. I could curse thee now.
Bel. If you do hate, you could not curse me worse;
The gods have not a punishment in store
Greater for me than is your hate.
Phi. Fie, fie,
So young and so dissembling! Tell me when
And where thou didst enjoy her, or let plagues
Fall on me, if I destroy thee not!
(*Draws his sword.*)
Bel. By heaven, I never did; and when I lie
To save my life, may I live long and loath'd!
Hew me asunder, and, whilst I can think,
I'll love those pieces you have cut away
Better than those that grow, and kiss those limbs
Because you made 'em so.
Phi. Fear'st thou not death?
Can boys contemn that?
Bel. Oh, what boy is he
Can be content to live to be a man,
That sees the best of men thus passionate,
Thus without reason?
Phi. Oh, but thou dost not know
What 'tis to die.
Bel. Yes, I do know, my lord:
'Tis less than to be born; a lasting sleep;
A quiet resting from all jealousy,
A thing we all pursue. I know, besides,
It is but giving over a game
That must be lost.
Phi. But there are pains, false boy,
For perjur'd souls. Think but on those, and then
Thy heart will melt, and thou wilt utter all.
Bel. May they fall all upon me whilst I live,
If I be perjur'd, or have ever thought
Of that you charge me with! If I be false,
Send me to suffer in those punishments
You speak of; kill me!
Phi. Oh, what should I do?
Why, who can but believe him? He does swear
So earnestly, that if it were not true,
The gods would not endure him. Rise, Bellario:
Thy protestations are so deep, and thou
Dost look so truly when thou utter'st them,
That, though I know 'em false as were my hopes,

I cannot urge thee further. But thou wert
To blame to injure me, for I must love
Thy honest looks, and take no revenge upon
Thy tender youth. A love from me to thee
Is firm, whate'er thou dost; it troubles me
That I have call'd the blood out of thy cheeks,
That did so well become thee. But, good boy,
Let me not see thee more: something is done
That will distract me, that will make me mad,
If I behold thee. If thou tender'st me,
Let me not see thee.
Bel. I will fly as far
As there is morning, ere I give distaste
To that most honour'd mind. But through these tears,
Shed at my hopeless parting, I can see
A world of treason practis'd upon you,
And her, and me. Farewell for evermore!
If you shall hear that sorrow struck me dead,
And after find me loyal, let there be
A tear shed from you in my memory,
And I shall rest in peace. (*Exit.*)
Phi. Blessing be with thee,
Whatever thou deserv'st! Oh, where shall I
Go bathe this body? Nature too unkind,
That made no medicine for a troubled mind! (*Exit.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Arethusa.)

Are. I marvel my boy comes not back again:
But that I know my love will question him
Over and over, — how I slept, wak'd, talk'd,
How I rememb'red him when his dear name
Was last spoke, and how when I sigh'd, wept, sung,
And ten thousand such, — I should be angry at his stay.

(*Enter* King.)

King. What, at your meditations! Who attends you?
Are. None but my single self. I need no guard;
I do no wrong, nor fear none.
King. Tell me, have you not a boy?
Are. Yes, sir.
King. What kind of boy?
Are. A page, a waiting-boy.
King. A handsome boy?
Are. I think he be not ugly:
Well qualified and dutiful I know him;
I took him not for beauty.
King. He speaks and sings and plays?
Are. Yes, sir.
King. About eighteen?
Are. I never ask'd his age.
King. Is he full of service?
Are. By your pardon, why do you ask?
King. Put him away.
Are. Sir!
King. Put him away, I say.
H'as done you that good service shames me to speak of.
Are. Good sir, let me understand you.
King. If you fear me,
Show it in duty; put away that boy.
Are. Let me have reason for it, sir, and then
Your will is my command.
King. Do not you blush to ask it? Cast him off,
Or I shall do the same to you. You're one
Shame with me, and so near unto myself,
That, by my life, I dare not tell myself
What you, myself, have done.
Are. What have I done, my lord?
King. 'Tis a new language, that all love to learn:
The common people speak it well already;
They need no grammar. Understand me well;
There be foul whispers stirring. Cast him off,
And suddenly. Do it! Farewell. (*Exit.*)
Are. Where may a maiden live securely free,
Keeping her honour fair? Not with the living.
They feed upon opinions, errors, dreams,
And make 'em truths; they draw a nourishment
Out of defamings, grow upon disgraces,
And, when they see a virtue fortified
Strongly above the batt'ry of their tongues,
Oh, how they cast to sink it! and, defeated,

(Soul-sick with poison) strike the monuments
Where noble names lie sleeping, till they sweat,
And the cold marble melt.

(*Enter* Philaster.)

Phi. Peace to your fairest thoughts, dearest mistress!
Are. Oh, my dearest servant, I have a war within me!
Phi. He must be more than man that makes these crystals
Run into rivers. Sweetest fair, the cause?
And, as I am your slave, tied to your goodness,
Your creature, made again from what I was
And newly-spirited, I'll right your honour.
Are. Oh, my best love, that boy?
Phi. What boy?
Are. The pretty boy you gave me ——
Phi. What of him?
Are. Must be no more mine.
Phi. Why?
Are. They are jealous of him.
Phi. Jealous! Who?
Are. The King.
Phi. [*aside*]. Oh, my misfortune!
Then 'tis no idle jealousy. — Let him go.
Are. Oh, cruel!
Are you hard-hearted too? Who shall now tell you
How much I lov'd you? Who shall swear it to you,
And weep the tears I send? Who shall now bring you
Letters, rings, bracelets? Lose his health in service?
Wake tedious nights in stories of your praise?
Who shall now sing your crying elegies,
And strike a sad soul into senseless pictures,
And make them mourn? Who shall take up his lute,
And touch it till he crown a silent sleep
Upon my eye-lids, making me dream, and cry,
"Oh, my dear, dear Philaster!"
Phi. [*aside*]. Oh, my heart!
Would he had broken thee, that made me know
This lady was not loyal! — Mistress,
Forget the boy; I'll get thee a far better.
Are. Oh, never, never such a boy again
As my Bellario!
Phi. 'Tis but your fond affection.
Are. With thee, my boy, farewell for ever
All secrecy in servants! Farewell, faith,
And all desire to do well for itself!
Let all that shall succeed thee for thy wrongs
Sell and betray chaste love!
Phi. And all this passion for a boy?
Are. He was your boy, and you put him to me,
And the loss of such must have a mourning for.
Phi. Oh, thou forgetful woman!
Are. How, my lord?
Phi. False Arethusa!
Hast thou a medicine to restore my wits,
When I have lost 'em? If not, leave to talk,
And do thus.
Are. Do what, sir? Would you sleep?
Phi. For ever, Arethusa. Oh, you gods
Give me a worthy patience! Have I stood,
Naked, alone, the shock of many fortunes?
Have I seen mischiefs numberless and mighty
Grow like a sea upon me? Have I taken
Danger as stern as death into my bosom,
And laught upon it, made it but a mirth,
And flung it by? Do I live now like him,
Under this tyrant King, that languishing
Hears his sad bell and sees his mourners? Do I
Bear all this bravely, and must sink at length
Under a woman's falsehood? Oh, that boy,
That cursed boy! None but a villain boy
To ease your lust?
Are. Nay, then, I am betrayed:
I feel the plot cast for my overthrow.
Oh, I am wretched!
Phi. Now you may take that little right I have
To this poor kingdom. Give it to your joy;
For I have no joy in it. Some far place,
Where never womankind durst set her foot
For bursting with her poisons, must I seek,
And live to curse you;

There dig a cave, and preach to birds and beasts
What woman is, and help to save them from you;
How heaven is in your eyes, but in your hearts
More hell than hell has; how your tongues, like scorpions,
Both heal and poison; how your thoughts are woven
With thousand changes in one subtle web,
And worn so by you; how that foolish man,
That reads the story of a woman's face
And dies believing it, is lost for ever;
How all the good you have is but a shadow,
I' the morning with you, and at night behind you,
Past and forgotten; how your vows are frosts,
Fast for a night, and with the next sun gone;
How you are, being taken all together,
A mere confusion, and so dead a chaos,
That love cannot distinguish. These sad texts,
Till my last hour, I am bound to utter of you.
So, farewell all my woe, all my delight! (*Exit.*)
ARE. Be merciful, ye gods, and strike me dead!
What way have I deserv'd this? Make my breast
Transparent as pure crystall, that the world,
Jealous of me, may see the foulest thought
My heart holds. Where shall a woman turn her eyes,
To find out constancy?

(*Enter* BELLARIO.)

Save me, how black
And guiltily, methinks, that boy looks now!
Oh, thou dissembler, that, before thou spak'st,
Wert in thy cradle false, sent to make lies
And betray innocents! Thy lord and thou
May glory in the ashes of a maid
Fool'd by her passion; but the conquest is
Nothing so great as wicked. Fly away!
Let my command force thee to that which shame
Would do without it. If thou understood'st
The loathed office thou hast undergone,
Why, thou wouldst hide thee under heaps of hills,
Lest men should dig and find thee.
BEL. Oh, what god,
Angry with men, hath sent this strange disease
Into the noblest minds! Madam, this grief
You add unto me is no more than drops
To seas, for which they are not seen to swell.
My lord hath struck his anger through my heart,
And let out all the hope of future joys.
You need not bid me fly; I came to part,
To take my latest leave. Farewell for ever!
I durst not run away in honesty
From such a lady, like a boy that stole
Or made some grievous fault. The power of gods
Assist you in your sufferings! Hasty time
Reveal the truth to your abused lord
And mine, that he may know your worth; whilst I
Go seek out some forgotten place to die! (*Exit.*)
ARE. Peace guide thee! Thou hast overthrown me once;
Yet, if I had another Troy to lose,
Thou, or another villain with thy looks,
Might talk me out of it, and send me naked,
My hair dishevell'd, through the fiery streets.

(*Enter a Lady.*)

LADY. Madam, the King would hunt, and calls for you
With earnestness.
ARE. I am in tune to hunt!
Diana, if thou canst rage with a maid
As with a man, let me discover thee
Bathing, and turn me to a fearful hind,
That I may die pursued by cruel hounds,
And have my story written in my wounds!
(*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

Scene I.

(*Enter* King, Pharamond, Arethusa, Galatea. Megra, Dion, Cleremont, Thrasiline, *and Attendants.*)

King. What, are the hounds before and all the woodmen?
Our horses ready and our bows bent?
Dion. All, sir.
King [*to* Pharamond]. You are cloudy, sir. Come, we have forgotten
Your venial trepass; let not that sit heavy
Upon your spirit; here's none dare utter it.

Dion. He looks like an old surfeited stallion, dull as a dormouse. See how he sinks! The wench has shot him between wind and water, and, I hope, sprung a leak.

Thra. He needs no teaching, he strikes sure enough. His greatest fault is, he hunts too much in the purlieus; would he would leave off poaching!

Dion. And for his horn, h'as left it at the lodge where he lay late. Oh, he's a precious limehound! Turn him loose upon the pursuit of a lady, and if he lose her, hang him up i' the slip. When my fox-bitch Beauty grows proud, I'll borrow him.

King. Is your boy turn'd away?

Are. You did command, sir, and I obey'd you.

King. 'Tis well done. Hark ye further. [*They talk apart.*]

Cle. Is't possible this fellow should repent? Methinks, that were not noble in him; and yet he looks like a mortified member, as if he had a sick man's salve in's mouth. If a worse man had done this fault now, some physical justice or other would presently (without the help of an almanack) have opened the obstructions of his liver, and let him blood with a dog-whip.

Dion. See, see how modestly yon lady looks, as if she came from churching with her neighbours! Why, what a devil can a man see in her face but that she's honest!

Thra. Faith, no great matter to speak of; a foolish twinkling with the eye, that spoils her coat; but he must be a cunning herald that finds it.

Dion. See how they muster one another! Oh, there's a rank regiment where the devil carries the colours and his dam drum-major! Now the world and the flesh come behind with the carriage.

Cle. Sure this lady has a good turn done her against her will; before she was common talk, now none dare say cantharides can stir her. Her face looks like a warrant, willing and commanding all tongues, as they will answer it, to be tied up and bolted when this lady means to let herself loose. As I live, she has got her a goodly protection and a gracious; and may use her body discreetly for her health's sake, once a week, excepting Lent and dog-days. Oh, if they were to be got for money, what a great sum would come out of the city for these licences!

King. To horse, to horse! we lose the morning, gentlemen. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter two Woodmen.*)

1 Wood. What, have you lodged the deer?

2 Wood. Yes, they are ready for the bow.

1 Wood. Who shoots?

2 Wood. The princess.

1 Wood. No, she'll hunt.

2 Wood. She'll take a stand, I say.

1 Wood. Who else?

2 Wood. Why, the young stranger-prince.

1 Wood. He shall shoot in a stone-bow for me. I never lov'd his beyond-sea-ship since he forsook the say, for paying ten shillings. He was there at the fall of a deer, and would needs (out of his mightiness) give ten groats for the dowcets; marry, his steward would have the velvet-head into the bargain, to turf his hat withal. I think he should love venery; he is an old Sir Tristrem; for, if you be remember'd, he forsook the stag once to strike a rascal miching in a meadow,

and her he kill'd in the eye. Who shoots else?

2 Wood. The Lady Galatea.

1 Wood. That's a good wench, an she would not chide us for tumbling of her women in the brakes. She's liberal, and by the Gods, they say she's honest, and whether that be a fault, I have nothing to do. There's all?

2 Wood. No, one more; Megra.

1 Wood. That's a firker, i' faith, boy. There's a wench will ride her haunches as hard after a kennel of hounds as a hunting saddle, and when she comes home, get 'em clapt, and all is well again. I have known her lose herself three times in one afternoon (if the woods have been answerable), and it has been work enough for one man to find her, and he has sweat for it. She rides well and she pays well. Hark! let's go. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter* Philaster.)

Phi. Oh, that I had been nourish'd in these woods
With milk of goats and acorns, and not known
The right of crowns nor the dissembling trains
Of women's looks; but digg'd myself a cave
Where I, my fire, my cattle, and my bed,
Might have been shut together in one shed;
And then had taken me some mountain-girl,
Beaten with winds, chaste as the hard'ned rocks
Whereon she dwelt, that might have strewed my bed
With leaves and reeds, and with the skins of beasts,
Our neighbours, and have borne at her big breasts
My large coarse issue! This had been a life
Free from vexation.

(*Enter* Bellario.)

Bel. Oh, wicked men!
An innocent may walk safe among beasts;
Nothing assaults me here. See, my griev'd lord
Sits as his soul were searching out a way
To leave his body! — Pardon me, that must
Break thy last commandment; for I must speak.
You that are griev'd can pity; hear, my lord!

Phi. Is there a creature yet so miserable,
That I can pity?

Bel. Oh, my noble lord,
View my strange fortune, and bestow on me,
According to your bounty (if my service
Can merit nothing), so much as may serve
To keep that little piece I hold of life
From cold and hunger!

Phi. Is it thou? Be gone!
Go, sell those misbeseeming clothes thou wear'st,
And feed thyself with them.

Bel. Alas, my lord, I can get nothing for them!
The silly country-people think 'tis treason
To touch such gay things.

Phi. Now, by the gods, this is
Unkindly done, to vex me with thy sight.
Thou'rt fallen again to thy dissembling trade;
How shouldst thou think to cozen me again?
Remains there yet a plague untried for me?
Even so thou wept'st, and lookt'st, and spok'st when first
I took thee up.
Curse on the time! If thy commanding tears
Can work on any other, use thy art;
I'll not betray it. Which way wilt thou take,
That I may shun thee, for thine eyes are poison
To mine, and I am loth to grow in rage?
This way, or that way?

Bel. Any will serve; but I will choose to have
That path in chase that leads unto my grave. (*Exeunt severally.*)

(*Enter* [*on one side*] Dion, *and* [*on the other*] *the two Woodmen.*)

Dion. This is the strangest sudden chance! — You, woodmen!

1 Wood. My lord Dion?

DION. Saw you a lady come this way on a sable horse studded with stars of white?
2 WOOD. Was she not young and tall?
DION. Yes. Rode she to the wood or to the plain?
2 WOOD. Faith, my lord, we saw none. (*Exeunt Woodmen.*)
DION. Pox of your questions then!

(*Enter* CLEREMONT.)

What, is she found?
CLE. Nor will be, I think.

DION. Let him seek his daughter himself. She cannot stray about a little necessary natural business, but the whole court must be in arms. When she has done, we shall have peace.

CLE. There's already a thousand fatherless tales amongst us. Some say, her horse ran away with her; some, a wolf pursued her; others, 'twas a plot to kill her, and that arm'd men were seen in the wood: but questionless she rode away willingly.

(*Enter* KING *and* THRASILINE.)

KING. Where is she?
CLE. Sir, I cannot tell.
KING. How's that?
Answer me so again!
CLE. Sir, shall I lie?
KING. Yes, lie and damn, rather than tell me that.
I say again, where is she? Mutter not! —
Sir, speak you; where is she?
DION. Sir, I do not know.
KING. Speak that again so boldly, and, by Heaven,
It is thy last! — You, fellows, answer me;
Where is she? Mark me, all; I am your king:
I wish to see my daughter; show her me;
I do command you all, as you are subjects,
To show her me! What! am I not your king?
If ay, then am I not to be obeyed?
DION. Yes, if you command things possible and honest.
KING. Things possible and honest! Hear me, thou, —
Thou traitor, that dar'st confine thy King to things
Possible and honest! Show her me,
Or, let me perish, if I cover not
All Sicily with blood!
DION. Faith, I cannot,
Unless you tell me where she is.
KING. You have betray'd me; you have let me lose
The jewel of my life. Go, bring her to me,
And set her here before me. 'Tis the king
Will have it so; whose breath can still the winds,
Uncloud the sun, charm down the swelling sea,
And stop the floods of heaven. Speak, can it not?
DION. No.
KING. No! cannot the breath of kings do this?
DION. No; nor smell sweet itself, if once the lungs
Be but corrupted.
KING. Is it so? Take heed!
DION. Sir, take you heed how you dare the powers
That must be just.
KING. Alas! what are we kings!
Why do you gods place us above the rest,
To be serv'd, flatter'd, and ador'd, till we
Believe we hold within our hands your thunder?
And when we come to try the power we have,
There's not a leaf shakes at our threat'nings.
I have sinn'd, 'tis true, and here stand to be punish'd;
Yet would not thus be punish'd. Let me choose
My way, and lay it on!

DION. [*aside*]. He articles with the gods. Would somebody would draw bonds for the performance of covenants betwixt them!

(*Enter* PHARAMOND, GALATEA, *and* MEGRA.)

KING. What, is she found?
PHA. No; we have ta'en her horse;
He gallopt empty by. There is some treason.
You, Galatea, rode with her into the wood;
Why left you her?
GAL. She did command me.
KING. Command! you should not,

GAL. 'Twould ill become my fortunes and my birth
To disobey the daughter of my king.
KING. You're all cunning to obey us for our hurt;
But I will have her.
PHA. If I have her not,
By this hand, there shall be no more Sicily.
DION. [*aside*]. What, will he carry it to Spain in's pocket?
PHA. I will not leave one man alive, but the king,
A cook, and a tailor.

DION. [*aside*]. Yes; you may do well to spare your lady-bedfellow; and her you may keep for a spawner.

KING. [*aside*]. I see the injuries I have done must be reveng'd.
DION. Sir, this is not the way to find her out.
KING. Run all, disperse yourselves. The man that finds her,
Or (if she be kill'd) the traitor, I'll make him great.
DION. I know some would give five thousand pounds to find her.
PHA. Come, let us seek.
KING. Each man a several way; here I myself.
DION. Come, gentlemen, we here.
CLE. Lady, you must go search too.
MEG. I had rather be search'd myself.
(*Exeunt* [*severally*].)

[SCENE III.]

(*Enter* ARETHUSA.)

ARE. Where am I now? Feet, find me out a way,
Without the counsel of my troubled head.
I'll follow you boldly about these woods,
O'er mountains, thorough brambles, pits, and floods.
Heaven, I hope, will ease me: I am sick.
(*Sits down.*)

(*Enter* BELLARIO.)

BEL. [*aside*]. Yonder's my lady. God knows I want nothing,
Because I do not wish to live; yet I
Will try her charity. — Oh hear, you have plenty!
From that flowing store drop some on dry ground. — See,
The lively red is gone to guard her heart!
I fear she faints. — Madam, look up! — She breathes not. —
Open once more those rosy twins, and send
Unto my lord your latest farewell! — Oh, she stirs. —
How is it, Madam? Speak comfort.
ARE. 'Tis not gently done,
To put me in a miserable life,
And hold me there. I prithee, let me go;
I shall do best without thee; I am well.

(*Enter* PHILASTER.)

PHI. I am to blame to be so much in rage.
I'll tell her coolly when and where I heard
This killing truth. I will be temperate
In speaking, and as just in hearing. ——
Oh, monstrous! Tempt me not, you gods! good gods,
Tempt not a frail man! What's he, that has a heart,
But he must ease it here!
BEL. My lord, help, help! The princess!
ARE. I am well: forbear.
PHI. [*aside*]. Let me love lightning, let me be embrac'd
And kist by scorpions, or adore the eyes
Of basilisks, rather than trust the tongues
Of hell-bred women! Some good god look down,
And shrink these veins up! Stick me here a stone,
Lasting to ages in the memory
Of this damn'd act! — Hear me, you wicked ones!
You have put hills of fire into this breast,
Not to be quench'd with tears; for which may guilt
Sit on your bosoms! At your meals and beds
Despair await you! What, before my face?
Poison of asps between your lips! Diseases
Be your best issues! Nature make a curse,
And throw it on you!
ARE. Dear Philaster, leave
To be enrag'd, and hear me.
PHI. I have done;
Forgive my passion. Not the calmed sea,
When Aeolus locks up his windy brood,

Is less disturb'd than I. I'll make you know't.
Dear Arethusa, do but take this sword,
(Offers his drawn sword.)
And search how temperate a heart I have;
Then you and this your boy may live and reign
In lust without control. — Wilt thou, Bellario?
I prithee kill me; thou art poor, and may'st
Nourish ambitious thoughts; when I am dead,
Thy way were freer. Am I raging now?
If I were mad, I should desire to live.
Sirs, feel my pulse, whether you have known
A man in a more equal tune to die.

Bel. Alas, my lord, your pulse keeps madman's time!
So does your tongue.

Phi. You will not kill me, then?

Are. Kill you!

Bel. Not for the world.

Phi. I blame not thee,
Bellario; thou hast done but that which gods
Would have transform'd themselves to do. Be gone,
Leave me without reply; this is the last
Of all our meetings. — *(Exit* Bellario.*)* Kill me with this sword;
Be wise, or worse will follow: we are two
Earth cannot bear at once. Resolve to do,
Or suffer.

Are. If my fortune be so good to let me fall
Upon thy hand, I shall have peace in death.
Yet tell me this, will there be no slanders,
No jealousy in the other world; no ill there?

Phi. No.

Are. Show me, then, the way.

Phi. Then guide my feeble hand,
You that have power to do it, for I must
Perform a piece of justice! — If your youth
Have any way offended Heaven, let prayers
Short and effectual reconcile you to it.

Are. I am prepared.

(Enter a Country Fellow.)

C. Fell. I'll see the King, if he be in the forest; I have hunted him these two hours. If I should come home and not see him, my sisters would laugh at me. I can see nothing but people better hors'd than myself, that outride me; I can hear nothing but shouting. These kings had need of good brains; this whooping is able to put a mean man out of his wits. There's a courtier with his sword drawn; by this hand, upon a woman, I think!

Phi. Are you at peace?

Are. With heaven and earth.

Phi. May they divide thy soul and body! *(Wounds her.)*

C. Fell. Hold, dastard! strike a woman! Thou'rt a craven. I warrant thee, thou wouldst be loth to play half a dozen venies at wasters with a good fellow for a broken head.

Phi. Leave us, good friend,

Are. What ill-bred man art thou, to intrude thyself
Upon our private sports, our recreation?

C. Fell. God'uds me, I understand you not; but
I know the rogue has hurt you.

Phi. Pursue thy own affairs: it will be ill
To multiply blood upon my head; which thou
Wilt force me to.

C. Fell. I know not your rhetoric; but
I can lay it on, if you touch the woman.

Phi. Slave, take what thou deservest!
(They fight.)

Are. Heavens guard my lord!

C. Fell. Oh, do you breathe?

Phi. I hear the tread of people. I am hurt.
The gods take part against me: could this boor
Have held me thus else? I must shift for life,
Though I do loathe it. I would find a course
To lose it rather by my will than force.
(Exit.)

C. Fell. I cannot follow the rogue. I pray thee, wench, come and kiss me now.

(Enter Pharamond, Dion, Cleremont, Thrasiline, *and Woodmen.)*

Pha. What art thou?

C. FELL. Almost kill'd I am for a foolish woman; a knave has hurt her.

PHA. The princess, gentlemen! —
Where's the wound, madam! Is it dangerous?

ARE. He has not hurt me.

C. FELL. By God, she lies; h'as hurt her in the breast;
Look else.

PHA. O sacred spring of innocent blood!

DION. 'Tis above wonder! Who should dare this?

ARE. I felt it not.

PHA. Speak, villain, who has hurt the princess?

C. FELL. Is it the princess?

DION. Ay.

C. FELL. Then I have seen something yet.

PHA. But who has hurt her?

C. FELL. I told you, a rogue; I ne'er saw him before, I.

PHA. Madam, who did it?

ARE. Some dishonest wretch;
Alas, I know him not, and do forgive him!

C. FELL. He's hurt too; he cannot go far; I made my father's old fox fly about his ears.

PHA. How will you have me kill him?

ARE. Not at all; 'tis some distracted fellow.

PHA. By this hand, I'll leave ne'er a piece of him bigger than a nut, and bring him all to you in my hat.

ARE. Nay, good sir,
If you do take him, bring him quick to me,
And I will study for a punishment
Great as his fault.

PHA. I will.

ARE. But swear.

PHA. By all my love, I will. ——
Woodmen, conduct the princess to the King,
And bear that wounded fellow to dressing. ——
Come, gentlemen, we'll follow the chase close.

(*Exeunt* [*on one side*] PHARAMOND, DION, CLEREMONT, *and* THRASILINE; [*exit on the other*] ARETHUSA [*attended by*] 1 *Woodman.*)

C. FELL. I pray you, friend, let me see the King.

2 WOOD. That you shall, and receive thanks.

C. FELL. If I get clear with this, I'll go see no more gay sights. (*Exeunt.*)

[SCENE IV.]

(*Enter* BELLARIO.)

BEL. A heaviness near death sits on my brow,
And I must sleep. Bear me, thou gentle bank,
For ever, if thou wilt. You sweet ones all, [*Lies down.*]
Let me unworthy press you; I could wish
I rather were a corse strew'd o'er with you
Than quick above you. Dulness shuts mine eyes,
And I am giddy: oh, that I could take
So sound a sleep that I might never wake! [*Sleeps.*]

(*Enter* PHILASTER.)

PHI. I have done ill; my conscience calls me false
To strike at her that would not strike at me.
When I did fight, methought I heard her pray
The gods to guard me. She may be abus'd,
And I a loathed villain; if she be,
She will conceal who hurt her. He has wounds
And cannot follow; neither knows he me.
Who's this? Bellario sleeping! If thou be'st
Guilty, there is no justice that thy sleep
Should be so sound, and mine, whom thou hast wrong'd,
So broken. (*Cry within.*) Hark! I am pursued. You gods
I'll take this offer'd means of my escape.
They have no mark to know me but my blood,
If she be true; if false, let mischief light
On all the world at once! Sword, print my wounds
Upon this sleeping boy! I ha' none, I think,
Are mortal, nor would I lay greater on thee. (*Wounds* BELLARIO.)

BEL. Oh, death, I hope, is come! Blest be that hand!

It meant me well. Again, for pity's sake!
Phi. I have caught myself; (*Falls.*)
The loss of blood hath stay'd my flight. Here, here,
Is he that struck thee: take thy full revenge;
Use me, as I did mean thee, worse than death;
I'll teach thee to revenge. This luckless hand
Wounded the princess; tell my followers
Thou didst receive these hurts in staying me,
And I will second thee; get a reward.
Bel. Fly, fly, my lord, and save yourself!
Phi. How's this?
Wouldst thou I should be safe?
Bel. Else were it vain
For me to live. These little wounds I have
Ha' not bled much. Reach me that noble hand;
I'll help to cover you.
Phi. Art thou then true to me?
Bel. Or let me perish loath'd! Come, my good lord,
Creep in amongst those bushes; who does know
But that the gods may save your much-lov'd breath?
Phi. Then I shall die for grief, if not for this,
That I have wounded thee. What wilt thou do?
Bel. Shift for myself well. Peace! I hear 'em come.
[Philaster *creeps into a bush.*]
[*Voices*] *within.* Follow, follow, follow! that way they went.
Bel. With my own wounds I'll bloody my own sword.
I need not counterfeit to fall; Heaven knows
That I can stand no longer. (*Falls.*)

(*Enter* Pharamond, Dion, Cleremont, *and* Thrasiline.)

Pha. To this place we have trackt him by his blood.
Cle. Yonder, my lord, creeps one away.
Dion. Stay, sir! what are you?
Bel. A wretched creature, wounded in these woods
By beasts. Relieve me, if your names be men,
Or I shall perish.
Dion. This is he, my lord,
Upon my soul, that hurt her. 'Tis the boy.
That wicked boy, that serv'd her.
Pha. Oh, thou damn'd
In thy creation! What cause couldst thou shape
To hurt the princess?
Bel. Then I am betrayed.
Dion. Betrayed! No, apprehended.
Bel. I confess,
(Urge it no more) that, big with evil thoughts
I set upon her, and did make my aim,
Her death. For charity let fall at once
The punishment you mean, and do not load
This weary flesh with tortures.
Pha. I will know
Who hir'd thee to this deed.
Bel. Mine own revenge.
Pha. Revenge! for what?
Bel. It pleas'd her to receive
Me as her page and, when my fortunes ebb'd,
That men strid o'er them careless, she did shower
Her welcome graces on me, and did swell
My fortunes till they overflow'd their banks,
Threat'ning the men that crost 'em; when, as swift
As storms arise at sea, she turn'd her eyes
To burning suns upon me, and did dry
The streams she had bestow'd, leaving me worse
And more contemn'd than other little brooks,
Because I had been great. In short, I knew
I could not live, and therefore did desire
To die reveng'd.
Pha. If tortures can be found
Long as thy natural life, resolve to feel
The utmost rigour.
(Philaster *creeps out of the bush.*)
Cle. Help to lead him hence.
Phi. Turn back, you ravishers of innocence!
Know ye the price of that you bear away
So rudely?

Pha. Who's that?
Dion. 'Tis the Lord Philaster.
Phi. 'Tis not the treasure of all kings in one,
The wealth of Tagus, nor the rocks of pearl
That pave the court of Neptune, can weigh down
That virtue. It was I that hurt the princess.
Place me, some god, upon a pyramis
Higher than hills of earth, and lend a voice
Loud as your thunder to me, that from hence
I may discourse to all the under-world
The worth that dwells in him!
Pha. How's this?
Bel. My lord, some man
Weary of life, that would be glad to die.
Phi. Leave these untimely courtesies, Bellario.
Bel. Alas, he's mad! Come, will you lead me on?
Phi. By all the oaths that men ought most to keep,
And gods to punish most when men do break,
He touch'd her not. — Take heed, Bellario,
How thou dost drown the virtues thou hast shown
With perjury. — By all that's good, 'twas I!
You know she stood betwixt me and my right.
Pha. Thy own tongue be thy judge!
Cle. It was Philaster.
Dion. Is't not a brave boy?
Well, sirs, I fear me we were all deceived.
Phi. Have I no friend here?
Dion. Yes.
Phi. Then show it: some
Good body lend a hand to draw us nearer.
Would you have tears shed for you when you die?
Then lay me gently on his neck, that there
I may weep floods and breathe forth my spirit.
'Tis not the wealth of Plutus, nor the gold [*Embraces* Bel.]
Lockt in the heart of earth, can buy away
This arm-full from me; this had been a ransom
To have redeem'd the great Augustus Cæsar,
Had he been taken. You hard-hearted men,
More stony than these mountains, can you see
Such clear pure blood drop, and not cut your flesh
To stop his life, to bind whose bitter wounds,
Queens ought to tear their hair, and with their tears
Bathe 'em? — Forgive me, thou that art the wealth
Of poor Philaster!

(*Enter* King, Arethusa, *and Guard.*)

King. Is the villain ta'en?
Pha. Sir, here be two confess the deed; but sure
It was Philaster.
Phi. Question it no more;
It was.
King. The fellow that did fight with him,
Will tell us that.
Are. Aye me! I know he will.
King. Did not you know him?
Are. Sir, if it was he,
He was disguis'd.
Phi. I was so. — (*Aside.*) Oh, my stars,
That I should live still.
King. Thou ambitious fool,
Thou that hast laid a train for thy own life! —
Now I do mean to do, I'll leave to talk.
Bear them to prison.
Are. Sir, they did plot together to take hence
This harmless life; should it pass unreveng'd,
I should to earth go weeping. Grant me, then,
By all the love a father bears his child,
Their custodies, and that I may appoint
Their tortures and their deaths.
Dion. Death! Soft; our law will not reach that for this fault.
King. 'Tis granted; take 'em to you with a guard. —
Come, princely Pharamond, this business past,
We may with security go on

To your intended match.

[*Exeunt all except* Dion, Cleremont, *and* Thrasiline.]

Cle. I pray that this action lose not Philaster the hearts of the people.

Dion. Fear it not; their over-wise heads will think it but a trick. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT V.

Scene I.

(*Enter* Dion, Cleremont, *and* Thrasiline.)

Thra. Has the King sent for him to death?

Dion. Yes; but the King must know 'tis not in his power to war with Heaven.

Cle. We linger time; the King sent for Philaster and the headsman an hour ago.

Thra. Are all his wounds well?

Dion. All; they were but scratches; but the loss of blood made him faint.

Cle. We dally, gentlemen.

Thra. Away!

Dion. We'll scuffle hard before we perish. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Philaster, Arethusa, *and* Bellario.)

Are. Nay, faith, Philaster, grieve not; we are well.
Bel. Nay, good my lord, forbear; we're wondrous well.
Phi. Oh, Arethusa, oh, Bellario,
Leave to be kind!
I shall be shut from Heaven, as now from earth,
If you continue so. I am a man
False to a pair of the most trusty ones
That ever earth bore; can it bear us all?
Forgive, and leave me. But the King hath sent
To call me to my death: oh, shew it me,
And then forget me! And for thee, my boy,
I shall deliver words will mollify
The hearts of beasts to spare thy innocence.
Bel. Alas, my lord, my life is not a thing
Worthy your noble thoughts! 'Tis not a life,
'Tis but a piece of childhood thrown away.
Should I outlive you, I should then outlive
Virtue and honour; and when that day comes,
If ever I shall close these eyes but once,
May I live spotted for my perjury,
And waste my limbs to nothing!
Are. And I (the woful'st maid that ever was,
Forc'd with my hands to bring my lord to death)
Do by the honour of a virgin swear
To tell no hours beyond it!
Phi. Make me not hated so.
Are. Come from this prison all joyful to our deaths!
Phi. People will tear me, when they find you true
To such a wretch as I; I shall die loath'd.
Enjoy your kingdoms peaceably, whilst I
For ever sleep forgotten with my faults.
Every just servant, every maid in love,
Will have a piece of me, if you be true.
Are. My dear lord, say not so.
Bel. A piece of you!
He was not born of woman that can cut
It and look on.
Phi. Take me in tears betwixt you, for my heart
Will break with shame and sorrow.
Are. Why, 'tis well.
Bel. Lament no more.
Phi. Why, what would you have done
If you had wrong'd me basely, and had found
Your life no price compar'd to mine? For love, sirs,
Deal with me truly.
Bel. 'Twas mistaken, sir.
Phi. Why, if it were?
Bel. Then, sir, we would have ask'd
You pardon.
Phi. And have hope to enjoy it?
Are. Enjoy it! ay.
Phi. Would you indeed? Be plain.
Bel. We would, my lord.
Phi. Forgive me, then.
Are. So, so.
Bel. 'Tis as it should be now.
Phi. Lead to my death. (*Exeunt.*)

[SCENE III.]

(*Enter* KING, DION, CLEREMONT, THRASILINE [*and Attendants*].)

KING. Gentlemen, who saw the prince?
CLE. So please you, sir, he's gone to see the city
And the new platform, with some gentlemen
Attending on him.
KING. Is the princess ready
To bring her prisoner out?
THRA. She waits your grace.
KING. Tell her we stay.
(*Exit* THRASILINE.)
DION. [*aside*]. King, you may be deceiv'd yet.
The head you aim at cost more setting on
Than to be lost so lightly. If it must off, —
Like a wild overflow, that swoops before him
A golden stack, and with it shakes down bridges,
Cracks the strong hearts of pines, whose cable-roots
Held out a thousand storms, a thousand thunders,
And, so made mightier, takes whole villages
Upon his back, and in that heat of pride
Charges strong towns, towers, castles, palaces,
And lays them desolate; so shall thy head,
Thy noble head, bury the lives of thousands,
That must bleed with thee like a sacrifice,
In thy red ruins.

(*Enter* ARETHUSA, PHILASTER, BELLARIO *in a robe and garland* [*and* THRASILINE].)

KING. How now? What masque is this?
BEL. Right royal sir, I should
Sing you an epithalamion of these lovers,
But having lost my best airs with my fortunes,
And wanting a celestial harp to strike
This blessed union on, thus in glad story
I give you all. These two fair cedar-branches,
The noblest of the mountain where they grew,
Straightest and tallest, under whose still shades
The worthier beasts have made their lairs, and slept
Free from the fervour of the Sirian star
And the fell thunder-stroke, free from the clouds
When they were big with humour, and deliver'd
In thousand spouts their issues to the earth;
Oh, there was none but silent quiet there!
Till never-pleased Fortune shot up shrubs,
Base under-brambles, to divorce these branches;
And for a while they did so, and did reign
Over the mountain, and choke up his beauty
With brakes, rude thorns and thistles, till the sun
Scorcht them even to the roots and dried them there.
And now a gentle gale hath blown again,
That made these branches meet and twine together,
Never to be divided. The god that sings
His holy numbers over marriage-beds
Hath knit their noble hearts; and here they stand
Your children, mighty King; and I have done.
KING. How, how?
ARE. Sir, if you love it in plain truth,
(For now there is no masquing in't), this gentleman,
The prisoner that you gave me, is become
My keeper, and through all the bitter throes
Your jealousies and his ill fate have wrought him,
Thus nobly hath he struggled, and at length
Arrived here my dear husband,
KING. Your dear husband! —
Call in the Captain of the Citadel —
There you shall keep your wedding. I'll provide
A masque shall make your Hymen turn his saffron
Into a sullen coat, and sing sad requiems
To your departing souls.

Blood shall put out your torches; and, instead
Of gaudy flowers about your wanton necks,
An axe shall hang, like a prodigious meteor,
Ready to crop your loves' sweets. Hear, you gods!
From this time do I shake all title off
Of father to this woman, this base woman;
And what there is of vengeance in a lion
Chaft among dogs or robb'd of his dear young,
The same, enforc'd more terrible, more mighty,
Expect from me!
Are. Sir, by that little life I have left to swear by,
There's nothing that can stir me from myself.
What I have done, I have done without repentance,
For death can be no bugbear unto me,
So long as Pharamond is not my headsman.
Dion. [*aside*]. Sweet peace upon thy soul, thou worthy maid,
Whene'er thou diest! For this time I'll excuse thee,
Or be thy prologue.
Phi. Sir, let me speak next;
And let my dying words be better with you
Than my dull living actions. If you aim
At the dear life of this sweet innocent,
You are a tyrant and a savage monster,
[That feeds upon the blood you gave a life to;]
Your memory shall be as foul behind you,
As you are living; all your better deeds
Shall be in water writ, but this in marble;
No chronicle shall speak you, though your own,
But for the shame of men. No monument,
Though high and big as Pelion, shall be able
To cover this base murder: make it rich
With brass, with purest gold, and shining jasper,
Like the Pyramides; lay on epitaphs
Such as make great men gods; my little marble,
That only clothes my ashes, not my faults,
Shall far outshine it. And for after-issues,
Think not so madly of the heavenly wisdoms,
That they will give you more for your mad rage
To cut off, unless it be some snake, or something
Like yourself, that in his birth shall strangle you.
Remember my father, King! There was a fault,
But I forgive it. Let that sin persuade you
To love this lady; if you have a soul,
Think, save her, and be saved. For myself,
I have so long expected this glad hour,
So languisht under you, and daily withered,
That, Heaven knows, it is a joy to die;
I find a recreation in't.

(*Enter a Messenger.*)

Mess. Where is the King?
King. Here.
Mess. Get you to your strength,
And rescue the Prince Pharamond from danger;
He's taken prisoner by the citizens,
Fearing the Lord Philaster.
Dion. [*aside*]. Oh, brave followers!
Mutiny, my fine dear countrymen, mutiny!
Now, my brave valiant foremen, shew your weapons
In honour of your mistresses!

(*Enter a Second Messenger.*)

2 Mess. Arm, arm, arm, arm!
King. A thousand devils take 'em!
Dion. [*aside*]. A thousand blessings on 'em!
2 Mess. Arm, O King! The city is in mutiny,
Led by an old gray ruffian, who comes on
In rescue of the Lord Philaster.
King. Away to the citadel! I'll see them safe,
And then cope with these burghers. Let the guard
And all the gentlemen give strong attendance.
(*Exeunt all except* Dion, Cleremont, *and* Thrasiline.)
Cle. The city up! This was above our wishes.

Dion. Ay, and the marriage too. By my life,
This noble lady has deceiv'd us all.
A plague upon myself, a thousand plagues,
For having such unworthy thoughts of her dear honour!
Oh, I could beat myself! Or do you beat me,
And I'll beat you; for we had all one thought.

Cle. No no, 'twill but lose time.

Dion. You say true. Are your swords sharp? — Well, my dear countrymen What-ye-lacks, if you continue, and fall not back upon the first broken skin, I'll have you chronicled and chronicled, and cut and chronicled, and all-to-be-prais'd and sung in sonnets, and bawled in new brave ballads, that all tongues shall troll you in *saecula saeculorum*, my kind can-carriers.

Thra. What, if a toy take 'em i' th' heels now, and they run all away, and cry, "the devil take the hindmost"?

Dion. Then the same devil take the foremost too, and souse him for his breakfast! If they all prove cowards, my curses fly among them, and be speeding! May they have murrains reign to keep the gentlemen at home unbound in easy frieze! May the moths branch their velvets, and their silks only be worn before sore eyes! May their false lights undo 'em, and discover presses, holes, stains, and oldness in their stuffs, and make them shop-rid! May they keep whores and horses, and break; and live mewed up with necks of beef and turnips! May they have many children, and none like the father! May they know no language but that gibberish they prattle to their parcels, unless it be the goatish Latin they write in their bonds — and may they write that false, and lose their debts!

(*Re-enter* King.)

King. Now the vengeance of all the gods confound them! How they swarm together! What a hum they raise! — Devils choke your wild throats! — If a man had need to use their valours, he must pay a brokage for it, and then bring 'em on, and they will fight like sheep. 'Tis Philaster, none but Philaster, must allay this heat. They will not hear me speak, but fling dirt at me and call me tyrant. Oh, run, dear friend, and bring the Lord Philaster! Speak him fair; call him prince; do him all the courtesy you can; commend me to him. Oh, my wits, my wits!

(*Exit* Cleremont.)

Dion. [*aside*]. Oh, my brave countrymen! as I live, I will not buy a pin out of your walls for this. Nay, you shall cozen me, and I'll thank you, and send you brawn and bacon, and soil you every long vacation a brace of foremen, that at Michaelmas shall come up fat and kicking.

King. What they will do with this poor prince, the gods know, and I fear.

Dion. [*aside*]. Why, sir, they'll flay him, and make church-buckets on's skin, to quench rebellion; then clap a rivet in's sconce, and hang him up for a sign.

(*Enter* Cleremont *with* Philaster.)

King. Oh, worthy sir, forgive me! Do not make
Your miseries and my faults meet together,
To bring a greater danger. Be yourself,
Still sound amongst diseases. I have wrong'd you;
And though I find it last, and beaten to it,
Let first your goodness know it. Calm the people,
And be what you were born to. Take your love,
And with her my repentance, all my wishes,
And all my prayers. By the gods, my heart speaks this;
And if the least fall from me not perform'd,
May I be struck with thunder!

Phi. Mighty sir,
I will not do your greatness so much wrong,
As not to make your word truth. Free the princess
And the poor boy, and let me stand the shock
Of this mad sea-breach, which I'll either turn,
Or perish with it.

King. Let your own word free them.

Phi. Then thus I take my leave, kissing your hand,

And hanging on your royal word. Be kingly,
And be not mov'd, sir. I shall bring you peace
Or never bring myself back.
King. All the gods go with thee.
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene IV.]

(*Enter an old Captain and Citizens with* Pharamond.)

Cap. Come, my brave myrmidons, let us fall on.
Let your caps swarm, my boys, and your nimble tongues
Forget your mother-gibberish of "what do you lack?"
And set your mouths ope, children, till your palates
Fall frighted half a fathom past the cure
Of bay-salt and gross pepper, and then cry
"Philaster, brave Philaster!" Let Philaster
Be deeper in request, my ding-dongs,
My pairs of dear indentures, kings of clubs,
Than your cold water-camlets, or your paintings
Spitted with copper. Let not your hasty silks,
Or your branch'd cloth of bodkin, or your tissues,
Dearly belov'd of spiced cake and custards,
Your Robin Hoods, Scarlets, and Johns, tie your affections
In darkness to your shops. No dainty duckers,
Up with your three-pil'd spirits, your wrought valours;
And let your uncut cholers make the King feel
The measure of your mightiness. Philaster!
Cry, my rose-nobles, cry!
All. Philaster! Philaster!
Cap. How do you like this, my lord-prince?
These are mad boys, I tell you; these are things
That will not strike their top-sails to a foist,
And let a man of war, an argosy,
Hull and cry cockles.
Pha. Why, you rude slave, do you know what you do?
Cap. My pretty prince of puppets, we do know;
And give your greatness warning that you talk
No more such bug's-words, or that solder'd crown
Shall be scratch'd with a musket. Dear prince Pippin,
Down with your noble blood, or, as I live,
I'll have you coddled. — Let him loose, my spirits:
Make us a round ring with your bills, my Hectors,
And let us see what this trim man dares do.
Now, sir, have at you! here I lie;
And with this swashing blow (do you see, sweet prince?)
I could hulk your grace, and hang you up cross-legg'd.
Like a hare at a poulter's, and do this with this wiper.
Pha. You will not see me murder'd, wicked villains?
1 Cit. Yes, indeed, will we, sir; we have not seen one
For a great while.
Cap. He would have weapons, would he?
Give him a broadside, my brave boys, with your pikes;
Branch me his skin in flowers like a satin,
And between every flower a mortal cut. —
Your royalty shall ravel! — Jag him, gentlemen;
I'll have him cut to the kell, then down the seams.
O for a whip to make him galloon-laces!
I'll have a coach-whip.
Pha. Oh, spare me, gentlemen!
Cap. Hold, hold;
The man begins to fear and know himself.
He shall for this time only be seel'd up,
With a feather through his nose, that he may only
See heaven, and think whither he is going.
Nay, my beyond-sea sir, we will proclaim you:
You would be king!
Thou tender heir apparent to a church-ale,
Thou slight prince of single sarcenet,
Thou royal ring-tail, fit to fly at nothing

But poor men's poultry, and have every boy
Beat thee from that too with his bread and butter!
Pha. Gods keep me from these hell-hounds!
1 Cit. Shall's geld him, captain?
Cap. No, you shall spare his dowcets, my dear donsels;
As you respect the ladies, let them flourish.
The curses of a longing woman kill
As speedy as a plague, boys.
1 Cit. I'll have a leg, that's certain.
2 Cit. I'll have an arm.
3 Cit. I'll have his nose, and at mine own charge build
A college and clap't upon the gate.
4 Cit. I'll have his little gut to string a kit with;
For certainly a royal gut will sound like silver.
Pha. Would they were in thy belly, and I past
My pain once!
5 Cit. Good captain, let me have his liver to feed ferrets.
Cap. Who will have parcels else? Speak.
Pha. Good gods, consider me! I shall be tortur'd.
1 Cit. Captain, I'll give you the trimming of your two-hand sword,
And let me have his skin to make false scabbards.
2 Cit. He had no horns, sir, had he?
Cap. No, sir, he's a pollard.
What wouldst thou do with horns?
2 Cit. Oh, if he had had,
I would have made rare hafts and whistles of 'em;
But his shin-bones, if they be sound, shall serve me.

(*Enter* Philaster.)

All. Long live Philaster, the brave Prince Philaster!
Phi. I thank you, gentlemen. But why are these
Rude weapons brought abroad, to teach your hands
Uncivil trades?
Cap. My royal Rosicleer,
We are thy myrmidons, thy guard, thy roarers;
And when thy noble body is in durance,
Thus do we clap our musty murrions on,
And trace the streets in terror. Is it peace,
Thou Mars of men? Is the King sociable,
And bids thee live? Art thou above thy foemen,
And free as Phoebus? Speak. If not, this stand
Of royal blood shall be abroach, a-tilt,
And run even to the lees of honour.
Phi. Hold, and be satisfied. I am myself;
Free as my thoughts are; by the gods, I am!
Cap. Art thou the dainty darling of the King?
Art thou the Hylas to our Hercules?
Do the lords bow, and the regarded scarlets
Kiss their gumm'd golls, and cry, "We are your servants"?
Is the court navigable and the presence stuck
With flags of friendship? If not, we are thy castle,
And this man sleeps.
Phi. I am what I desire to be, your friend;
I am what I was born to be, your prince.
Pha. Sir, there is some humanity in you;
You have a noble soul. Forget my name,
And know my misery; set me safe aboard
From these wild cannibals, and as I live,
I'll quit this land for ever. There is nothing, —
Perpetual prisonment, cold, hunger, sickness
Of all sorts, of all dangers, and all together,
The worst company of the worst men, madness, age,
To be as many creatures as a woman,
And do as all they do, nay, to despair, —
But I would rather make it a new nature,
And live with all these, than endure one hour
Amongst these wild dogs.
Phi. I do pity you. — Friends, discharge your fears;
Deliver me the prince. I'll warrant you
I shall be old enough to find my safety.

3 Cit. Good sir, take heed he does not hurt you;
He is a fierce man, I can tell you, sir.
Cap. Prince, by your leave, I'll have a surcingle,
And make you like a hawk.
([Phar.] *strives.*)
Phi. Away, away, there is no danger in him:
Alas, he had rather sleep to shake his fit off!
Look you, friends, how gently he leads! Upon my word,
He's tame enough, he needs no further watching.
Good my friends, go to your houses,
And by me have your pardons and my love;
And know there shall be nothing in my power
You may deserve, but you shall have your wishes.
To give you more thanks, were to flatter you.
Continue still your love; and for an earnest,
Drink this. [*Gives money.*]
All. Long mayst thou live, brave prince, brave prince, brave prince!
(*Exeunt* Phil. *and* Phar.)
Cap. Go thy ways, thou art the king of courtesy!
Fall off again, my sweet youths. Come,
And every man trace to his house again,
And hang his pewter up; then to the tavern,
And bring your wives in muffs. We will have music;
And the red grape shall make us dance and rise, boys. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene V.]

(*Enter* King, Arethusa, Galatea, Megra, Dion, Cleremont, Thrasiline, Bellario, *and Attendants.*)

King. Is it appeas'd?
Dion. Sir, all is quiet as this dead of night,
As peaceable as sleep. My lord Philaster
Brings on the prince himself.
King. Kind gentleman!
I will not break the least word I have given
In promise to him. I have heap'd a world
Of grief upon his head, which yet I hope
To wash away.

(*Enter* Philaster *and* Pharamond.)

Cle. My lord is come.
King. My son!
Blest be the time that I have leave to call
Such virtue mine! Now thou art in mine arms,
Methinks I have a salve unto my breast
For all the stings that dwell there. Streams of grief
That I have wrong'd thee, and as much of joy
That I repent it, issue from mine eyes;
Let them appease thee. Take thy right; take her;
She is thy right too; and forget to urge
My vexed soul with that I did before.
Phi. Sir, it is blotted from my memory,
Past and forgotten. — For you, prince of Spain,
Whom I have thus redeem'd, you have full leave
To make an honourable voyage home.
And if you would go furnish'd to your realm
With fair provision, I do see a lady,
Methinks, would gladly bear you company.
How like you this piece?
Meg. Sir, he likes it well,
For he hath tried it, and hath found it worth
His princely liking. We were ta'en abed;
I know your meaning. I am not the first
That nature taught to seek a fellow forth;
Can shame remain perpetually in me,
And not in others? Or have princes salves
To cure ill names, that meaner people want?
Phi. What mean you?
Meg. You must get another ship,
To bear the princess and her boy together.
Dion. How now!
Meg. Others took me, and I took her and him
At that all women may be ta'en sometime.
Ship us all four, my lord; we can endure
Weather and wind alike.
King. Clear thou thyself, or know not me for father.
Are. This earth, how false it is! What means is left for me

To clear myself? It lies in your belief.
My lords, believe me; and let all things else
Struggle together to dishonour me.
Bel. Oh, stop your ears, great King, that I may speak
As freedom would! Then I will call this lady
As base as are her actions. Hear me, sir;
Believe your heated blood when it rebels
Against your reason, sooner than this lady.
Meg. By this good light, he bears it handsomely.
Phi. This lady! I will sooner trust the wind
With feathers, or the troubled sea with pearl,
Than her with any thing. Believe her not.
Why, think you, if I did believe her words,
I would outlive 'em? Honour cannot take
Revenge on you; then what were to be known
But death?
King. Forget her, sir, since all is knit
Between us. But I must request of you
One favour, and will sadly be denied.
Phi. Command, whate'er it be.
King. Swear to be true
To what you promise.
Phi. By the powers above,
Let it not be the death of her or him,
And it is granted!
King. Bear away that boy
To torture; I will have her clear'd or buried.
Phi. Oh, let me call my word back, worthy sir!
Ask something else: bury my life and right
In one poor grave; but do not take away
My life and fame at once.
King. Away with him! It stands irrevocable.
Phi. Turn all your eyes on me. Here stands a man,
The falsest and the basest of this world.
Set swords against this breast, some honest man,
For I have liv'd till I am pitied!
My former deeds were hateful; but this last
Is pitiful, for I unwillingly
Have given the dear preserver of my life
Unto his torture. Is it in the power
Of flesh and blood to carry this, and live?
(Offers to stab himself.)
Are. Dear sir, be patient yet! Oh, stay that hand!
King. Sirs, strip that boy.
Dion. Come, sir; your tender flesh
Will try your constancy.
Bel. Oh, kill me, gentlemen!
Dion. No. — Help, sirs.
Bel. Will you torture me?
King. Haste there;
Why stay you?
Bel. Then I shall not break my vow,
You know, just gods, though I discover all.
King. How's that? Will he confess?
Dion. Sir, so he says.
King. Speak then.
Bel. Great King, if you command
This lord to talk with me alone, my tongue
Urg'd by my heart, shall utter all the thoughts
My youth hath known; and stranger things than these
You hear not often.
King. Walk aside with him.
[Dion *and* Bellario *walk apart.*]
Dion. Why speak'st thou not?
Bel. Know you this face, my lord?
Dion. No.
Bel. Have you not seen it, nor the like?
Dion. Yes, I have seen the like, but readily
I know not where.
Bel. I have been often told
In court of one Euphrasia, a lady,
And daughter to you; betwixt whom and me
They that would flatter my bad face would swear
There was such strange resemblance, that we two
Could not be known asunder, drest alike.
Dion. By Heaven, and so there is!
Bel. For her fair sake,
Who now doth spend the spring-time of her life
In holy pilgrimage, move to the King,
That I may scape this torture.
Dion. But thou speak'st
As like Euphrasia as thou dost look.

How came it to thy knowledge that she lives
In pilgrimage?
Bel. I know it not, my lord;
But I have heard it, and do scarce believe it.
Dion. Oh, my shame! is it possible? Draw near,
That I may gaze upon thee. Art thou she,
Or else her murderer? Where wert thou born?
Bel. In Syracusa.
Dion. What’s thy name?
Bel. Euphrasia.
Dion. Oh, ’tis just, ’tis she!
Now I do know thee. Oh, that thou hadst died,
And I had never seen thee nor my shame!
How shall I own thee? Shall this tongue of mine
E’er call thee daughter more?
Bel. Would I had died indeed! I wish it too;
And so I must have done by vow, ere publish’d
What I have told, but that there was no means
To hide it longer. Yet I joy in this,
The princess is all clear.
King. What, have you done?
Dion. All is discovered.
Phi. Why then hold you me?
All is discovered! Pray you, let me go.
(*Offers to stab himself.*)
King. Stay him.
Are. What is discovered?
Dion. Why, my shame.
It is a woman; let her speak the rest.
Phi. How? That again!
Dion. It is a woman.
Phi. Blest be you powers that favour innocence!
King. Lay hold upon that lady.
[Megra *is seized.*]
Phi. It is a woman, sir! — Hark, gentlemen,
It is a woman! — Arethusa, take
My soul into thy breast, that would be gone
With joy. It is a woman! Thou art fair,
And virtuous still to ages, in despite
Of malice.
King. Speak you, where lies his shame?
Bel. I am his daughter.
Phi. The gods are just.
Dion. I dare accuse none; but, before you two,
The virtue of our age, I bend my knee
For mercy. [*Kneels.*]
Phi. [*raising him*]. Take it freely; for I know,
Though what thou didst were undiscreetly done,
’Twas meant well.
Are. And for me,
I have a power to pardon sins, as oft
As any man has power to wrong me.
Cle. Noble and worthy!
Phi. But, Bellario,
(For I must call thee still so,) tell me why
Thou didst conceal thy sex. It was a fault,
A fault, Bellario, though thy other deeds
Of truth outweigh’d it: all these jealousies
Had flown to nothing if thou hadst discovered
What now we know.
Bel. My father oft would speak
Your worth and virtue; and, as I did grow
More and more apprehensive, I did thirst
To see the man so prais’d. But yet all this
Was but a maiden-longing, to be lost
As soon as found; till, sitting in my window,
Printing my thoughts in lawn, I saw a god,
I thought, (but it was you,) enter our gates.
My blood flew out and back again, as fast
As I had puft it forth and suckt it in
Like breath. Then was I call’d away in haste
To entertain you. Never was a man,
Heav’d from a sheep-cote to a sceptre, rais’d
So high in thoughts as I. You left a kiss
Upon these lips then, which I mean to keep
From you for ever. I did hear you talk,
Far above singing. After you were gone,
I grew acquainted with my heart, and search’d
What stirr’d it so: alas, I found it love!
Yet far from lust; for, could I but have liv’d
In presence of you, I had had my end.
For this I did delude my noble father
With a feign’d pilgrimage, and drest myself
In habit of a boy; and, for I knew

My birth no match for you, I was past hope
Of having you; and, understanding well
That when I made discovery of my sex
I could not stay with you, I made a vow,
By all the most religious things a maid
Could call together, never to be known,
Whilst there was hope to hide me from men's eyes,
For other than I seem'd, that I might ever
Abide with you. Then sat I by the fount,
Where first you took me up.
King. Search out a match
Within our kingdom, where and when thou wilt,
And I will pay thy dowry; and thyself
Wilt well deserve him.
Bel. Never, sir, will I
Marry; it is a thing within my vow:
But, if I may have leave to serve the princess,
To see the virtues of her lord and her,
I shall have hope to live.
Are. I, Philaster,
Cannot be jealous, though you had a lady
Drest like a page to serve you; nor will I
Suspect her living here. — Come, live with me;
Live free as I do. She that loves my lord,
Curst be the wife that hates her!
Phi. I grieve such virtue should be laid in earth
Without an heir. — Hear me, my royal father:
Wrong not the freedom of our souls so much,
To think to take revenge of that base woman;
Her malice cannot hurt us. Set her free
As she was born, saving from shame and sin.
King. Set her at liberty. — But leave the court;
This is no place for such. — You, Pharamond,
Shall have free passage, and a conduct home
Worthy so great a prince. When you come there,
Remember 'twas your faults that lost you her,
And not my purpos'd will.
Pha. I do confess,
Renowned sir.
King. Last, join your hands in one. Enjoy, Philaster,
This kingdom, which is yours, and, after me,
Whatever I call mine. My blessing on you!
All happy hours be at your marriage-joys,
That you may grow yourselves over all lands,
And live to see your plenteous branches spring
Wherever there is sun! Let princes learn
By this to rule the passions of their blood;
For what Heaven wills can never be withstood. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI

By JOHN WEBSTER

(*c.* 1613)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Ferdinand [Duke of Calabria].
Cardinal [his brother].
Antonio [Bologna, Steward of the Household to the Duchess].
Delio [his friend].
Daniel de Bosola [Gentleman of the Horse to the Duchess].
[Castruccio, an old Lord.]
Marquis of Pescara.
[Count] Malatesti.
Roderigo,
Silvio, [Lords.]
Grisolan,
Doctor.
The Several Madmen.

Duchess [of Malfi].
Cariola [her woman].
[Julia, Castruccio's wife, and] the Cardinal's mistress.
[Old Lady.]
Ladies, Three Young Children, Two Pilgrims, Executioners, Court Officers, and Attendants.

[Scene — Amalfi, Rome, Loretto, Milan.
Time — Early Sixteenth Century.]

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI

ACT I.

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Antonio *and* Delio.)

Delio. You are welcome to your country, dear Antonio;
You have been long in France, and you return
A very formal Frenchman in your habit.
How do you like the French court?
Ant. I admire it.
In seeking to reduce both state and people
To a fix'd order, their judicious king
Begins at home; quits first his royal palace
Of flatt'ring sycophants, of dissolute
And infamous persons, — which he sweetly terms
His master's master-piece, the work of heaven;
Considering duly that a prince's court
Is like a common fountain, whence should flow
Pure silver drops in general, but if't chance
Some curs'd example poison't near the head,
Death and diseases through the whole land spread.
And what is't makes this blessed government
But a most provident council, who dare freely
Inform him the corruption of the times?
Though some o' th' court hold it presumption
To instruct princes what they ought to do,
It is a noble duty to inform them
What thy ought to forsee. — Here comes Bosola,
The only court-gall; yet I observe his railing
Is not for simple love of piety:
Indeed, he rails at those things which he wants;
Would be as lecherous, covetous, or proud,
Bloody, or envious, as any man,
If he had means to be so. — Here's the cardinal.

[*Enter* Cardinal *and* Bosola.]

Bos. I do haunt you still.

Card. So.

Bos. I have done you better service than to be slighted thus. Miserable age, where only the reward of doing well is the doing of it!

Card. You enforce your merit too much.

Bos. I fell into the galleys in your service; where, for two years together, I wore two towels instead of a shirt, with a knot on the shoulder, after the fashion of a Roman mantle. Slighted thus! I will thrive some way. Blackbirds fatten best in hard weather; why not I in these dog-days?

Card. Would you could become honest!

Bos. With all your divinity do but direct me the way to it. I have known many travel far for it, and yet return as arrant knaves as they went forth, because they carried themselves always along with them. [*Exit* Cardinal.] Are you gone? Some fellows, they say, are possessed with the devil, but this great fellow were able to possess the greatest devil, and make him worse.

Ant. He hath denied thee some suit?

Bos. He and his brother are like plum-trees that grow crooked over standing-pools; they are rich and o'erladen with fruit, but none but crows, pies, and caterpillars feed on them. Could I be one of their flatt'ring panders, I would hang on their ears like a horseleech, till I were full, and then drop off. I pray, leave me. Who would rely upon these miserable dependencies, in expectation to be advanc'd to-morrow? What creature ever fed worse than hoping Tantalus? Nor ever died any man more fearfully than he that hop'd for a pardon. There are rewards for hawks and dogs when they have done us service; but for a soldier that hazards his limbs in a battle, nothing but a kind of geometry is his last supportation.

DELIO. Geometry?

BOS. Ay, to hang in a fair pair of slings, take his latter swing in the world upon an honourable pair of crutches, from hospital to hospital. Fare ye well, sir: and yet do not you scorn us; for places in the court are but like beds in the hospital, where this man's head lies at that man's foot, and so lower and lower. [*Exit.*]

DEL. I knew this fellow seven years in the galleys
For a notorious murder; and 'twas thought
The cardinal suborn'd it: he was releas'd
By the French general, Gaston de Foix,
When he recover'd Naples.

ANT. 'Tis great pity
He should be thus neglected: I have heard
He's very valiant. This foul melancholy
Will poison all his goodness; for, I'll tell you,
If too immoderate sleep be truly said
To be an inward rust unto the soul,
It then doth follow want of action
Breeds all black malcontents; and their close rearing,
Like moths in cloth, do hurt for want of wearing.

SCENE II.

(ANTONIO, DELIO. [*Enter*] SILVIO, CASTRUCCIO, JULIA, RODERIGO, *and* GRISOLAN.)

DELIO. The presence 'gins to fill: you promis'd me
To make me the partaker of the natures
Of some of your great courtiers.

ANT. The lord cardinal's
And other strangers' that are now in court?
I shall. — Here comes the great Calabrian duke.

[*Enter* FERDINAND *and Attendants.*]

FERD. Who took the ring oft'nest?

SIL. Antonio Bologna, my lord.

FERD. Our sister duchess' great master of her household? Give him the jewel. — When shall we leave this sportive action, and fall to action indeed?

CAST. Methinks, my lord, you should not desire to go to war in person.

FERD. Now for some gravity. — Why, my lord?

CAST. It is fitting a soldier arise to be a prince, but not necessary a prince descend to be a captain.

FERD. No?

CAST. No, my lord; he were far better do it by a deputy.

FERD. Why should he not as well sleep or eat by a deputy? This might take idle, offensive, and base office from him, whereas the other deprives him of honour.

CAST. Believe my experience, that realm is never long in quiet where the ruler is a soldier.

FERD. Thou told'st me thy wife could not endure fighting.

CAST. True, my lord.

FERD. And of a jest she broke of a captain she met full of wounds: I have forgot it.

CAST. She told him, my lord, he was a pitiful fellow, to lie, like the children of Ismael, all in tents.

FERD. Why, there's a wit were able to undo all the chirurgeons o' the city; for although gallants should quarrel, and had drawn their weapons, and were ready to go to it, yet her persuasions would make them put up.

CAST. That she would, my lord. — How do you like my Spanish gennet?

ROD. He is all fire.

FERD. I am of Pliny's opinion, I think he was begot by the wind; he runs as if he were ballas'd with quicksilver.

SIL. True, my lord, he reels from the tilt often.

ROD. GRIS. Ha, ha, ha!

FERD. Why do you laugh? Methinks you that are courtiers should be my touchwood, take fire when I give fire; that is, laugh when I laugh, were the subject never so witty.

CAST. True, my lord: I myself have

heard a very good jest, and have scorn'd to seem to have so silly a wit as to understand it.

Ferd. But I can laugh at your fool, my lord.

Cast. He cannot speak, you know, but he makes faces; my lady cannot abide him.

Ferd. No?

Cast. Nor endure to be in merry company; for she says too full laughing, and too much company, fills her too much of the wrinkle.

Ferd. I would, then, have a mathematical instrument made for her face, that she might not laugh out of compass. — I shall shortly visit you at Milan, Lord Silvio.

Sil. Your grace shall arrive most welcome.

Ferd. You are a good horseman, Antonio: you have excellent riders in France; what do you think of good horsemanship?

Ant. Nobly, my lord: as out of the Grecian horse issued many famous princes, so out of brave horsemanship arise the first sparks of growing resolution, that raise the mind to noble action.

Ferd. You have bespoke it worthily.

Sil. Your brother, the lord cardinal, and sister duchess.

[*Enter* Cardinal, *with* Duchess, *and* Cariola.]

Card. Are the galleys come about?

Gris. They are, my lord.

Ferd. Here's the Lord Silvio is come to take his leave.

Delio. Now, sir, your promise: what's that cardinal?
I mean his temper. They say he's a brave fellow,
Will play his five thousand crowns at tennis, dance,
Court ladies, and one that hath fought single combats.

Ant. Some such flashes superficially hang on him for form; but observe his inward character: he is a melancholy churchman. The spring in his face is nothing but the engend'ring of toads; where he is jealous of any man, he lays worse plots for them than ever was impos'd on Hercules, for he strews in his way flatterers, panders, intelligencers, atheists, and a thousand such political monsters. He should have been Pope; but instead of coming to it by the primitive decency of the church, he did bestow bribes so largely and so impudently as if he would have carried it away without heaven's knowledge. Some good he hath done ——

Delio. You have given too much of him. What's his brother?

Ant. The duke there? A most perverse and turbulent nature.
What appears in him mirth is merely outside;
If he laught heartily, it is to laugh
All honesty out of fashion.

Delio. Twins?

Ant. In quality.
He speaks with others' tongues, and hears men's suits
With others' ears; will seem to sleep o' th' bench
Only to entrap offenders in their answers;
Dooms men to death by information;
Rewards by hearsay.

Delio. Then the law to him
Is like a foul, black cobweb to a spider, —
He makes it his dwelling and a prison
To entangle those shall feed him.

Ant. Most true:
He never pays debts unless they be shrewd turns,
And those he will confess that he doth owe.
Last, for his brother there, the cardinal,
They that do flatter him most say oracles
Hang at his lips; and verily I believe them,
For the devil speaks in them.
But for their sister, the right noble duchess,
You never fix'd your eye on three fair medals
Cast in one figure, of so different temper.
For her discourse, it is so full of rapture,
You only will begin then to be sorry
When she doth end her speech, and wish, in wonder,
She held it less vain-glory to talk much,

Than your penance to hear her. Whilst she speaks,
She throws upon a man so sweet a look
That it were able to raise one to a galliard
That lay in a dead palsy, and to dote
On that sweet countenance; but in that look
There speaketh so divine a continence
As cuts off all lascivious and vain hope.
Her days are practis'd in such noble virtue,
That sure her nights, nay, more, her very sleeps,
Are more in heaven than other ladies' shrifts.
Let all sweet ladies break their flatt'ring glasses,
And dress themselves in her.
Delio. Fie, Antonio,
You play the wire-drawer with her commendations.
Ant. I'll case the picture up: only thus much;
All her particular worth grows to this sum, —
She stains the time past, lights the time to come.
Cari. You must attend my lady in the gallery,
Some half an hour hence.
Ant. I shall.
[*Exeunt* Antonio *and* Delio.]
Ferd. Sister, I have a suit to you.
Duch. To me, sir?
Ferd. A gentleman here, Daniel de Bosola,
One that was in the galleys ——
Duch. Yes, I know him.
Ferd. A worthy fellow he's: pray, let me entreat for
The provisorship of your horse.
Duch. Your knowledge of him
Commends him and prefers him.
Ferd. Call him hither.
[*Exeunt Attendants.*]
We [are] now upon parting. Good Lord Silvio,
Do us commend to all our noble friends
At the leaguer.
Sil. Sir, I shall.
[Duch.] You are for Milan?
Sil. I am.
Duch. Bring the caroches. — We'll bring you down
To the haven.
[*Exeunt* Duchess, Silvio, Castruccio, Roderigo, Grisolan, Cariola, Julia, *and Attendants.*]
Card. Be sure you entertain that Bosola
For your intelligence. I would not be seen in't;
And therefore many times I have slighted him
When he did court our furtherance, as this morning.
Ferd. Antonio, the great master of her household,
Had been far fitter.
Card. You are deceiv'd in him.
His nature is too honest for such business. —
He comes: I'll leave you. [*Exit.*]

[*Re-enter* Bosola.]

Bos. I was lur'd to you.
Ferd. My brother, here, the cardinal could never
Abide you.
Bos. Never since he was in my debt.
Ferd. May be some oblique character in your face
Made him suspect you.
Bos. Doth he study physiognomy?
There's no more credit to be given to th' face
Than to a sick man's urine, which some call
The physician's whore, because she cozens him.
He did suspect me wrongfully.
Ferd. For that
You must give great men leave to take their times.
Distrust doth cause us seldom be deceiv'd.
You see the oft shaking of the cedar-tree
Fastens it more at root.
Bos. Yet take heed;
For to suspect a friend unworthily
Instructs him the next way to suspect you,
And prompts him to deceive you.

Ferd. There's gold.
Bos. So:
What follows? — [*Aside.*] Never rain'd such showers as these
Without thunderbolts i' th' tail of them. — Whose throat must I cut?
Ferd. Your inclination to shed blood rides post
Before my occasion to use you. I give you that
To live i' th' court here, and observe the duchess;
To note all the particulars of her behaviour,
What suitors do solicit her for marriage,
And whom she best affects. She's a young widow:
I would not have her marry again.
Bos. No, sir?
Ferd. Do not you ask the reason; but be satisfied.
I say I would not.
Bos. It seems you would create me
One of your familiars.
Ferd. Familiar! What's that?
Bos. Why, a very quaint invisible devil in flesh, —
An intelligencer.
Ferd. Such a kind of thriving thing
I would wish thee; and ere long thou mayst arrive
At a higher place by't.
Bos. Take your devils,
Which hell calls angels! These curs'd gifts would make
You a corrupter, me an impudent traitor;
And should I take these, they'd take me [to] hell.
Ferd. Sir, I'll take nothing from you that I have given.
There is a place that I procur'd for you
This morning, the provisorship o' th' horse;
Have you heard on't?
Bos. No.
Ferd. 'Tis yours: is't not worth thanks?
Bos. I would have you curse yourself now, that your bounty
(Which makes men truly noble) e'er should make me
A villain. O, that to avoid ingratitude
For the good deed you have done me, I must do
All the ill man can invent! Thus the devil
Candies all sins o'er: and what heaven terms vile,
That names he complimental.
Ferd. Be yourself;
Keep your old garb of melancholy; 'twill express
You envy those that stand above your reach,
Yet strive not to come near 'em. This will gain
Access to private lodgings, where yourself
May, like a politic dormouse ——
Bos. As I have seen some
Feed in a lord's dish, half asleep, not seeming
To listen to any talk; and yet these rogues
Have cut his throat in a dream. What's my place?
The provisorship o' th' horse? Say, then, my corruption
Grew out of horse-dung: I am your creature.
Ferd. Away! [*Exit.*]
Bos. Let good men, for good deeds, covet good fame,
Since place and riches oft are bribes of shame.
Sometimes the devil doth preach. (*Exit.*)

[Scene III.]

[*Enter* Ferdinand, Duchess, Cardinal, *and* Cariola.]

Card. We are to part from you; and your own discretion
Must now be your director.
Ferd. You are a widow:
You know already what man is; and therefore
Let not youth, high promotion, eloquence ——
Card. No,
Nor anything without the addition, honour,
Sway your high blood.
Ferd. Marry! They are most luxurious
Will wed twice.
Card. O, fie!
Ferd. Their livers are more spotted

Than Laban's sheep.
Duch. Diamonds are of most value,
They say, that have past through most jewellers' hands.
Ferd. Whores by that rule are precious.
Duch. Will you hear me?
I'll never marry.
Card. So most widows say;
But commonly that motion lasts no longer
Than the turning of an hour-glass: the funeral sermon
And it end both together.
Ferd. Now hear me:
You live in a rank pasture, here, i' th' court;
There is a kind of honey-dew that's deadly;
'Twill poison your fame; look to't. Be not cunning;
For they whose faces do belie their hearts
Are witches ere they arrive at twenty years,
Ay, and give the devil suck.
Duch. This is terrible good counsel.
Ferd. Hypocrisy is woven of a fine small thread,
Subtler than Vulcan's engine: yet, believe't,
Your darkest actions, nay, your privat'st thoughts,
Will come to light.
Card. You may flatter yourself,
And take your own choice; privately be married
Under the eaves of night ——
Ferd. Think't the best voyage
That e'er you made; like the irregular crab,
Which, though't goes backward, thinks that it goes right
Because it goes its own way: but observe,
Such weddings may more properly be said
To be executed than celebrated.
Card. The marriage night
Is the entrance into some prison.
Ferd. And those joys,
Those lustful pleasures, are like heavy sleeps
Which do fore-run man's mischief.
Card. Fare you well.
Wisdom begins at the end: remember it. [*Exit.*]

Duch. I think this speech between you both was studied,
It came so roundly off.
Ferd. You are my sister;
This was my father's poniard, do you see?
I'd be loth to see't look rusty, 'cause 'twas his.
I would have you give o'er these chargeable revels:
A visor and a mask are whispering-rooms
That were nev'r built for goodness, — fare ye well —
And women like that part which, like the lamprey,
Hath nev'r a bone in't.
Duch. Fie, sir!
Ferd. Nay,
I mean the tongue; variety of courtship.
What cannot a neat knave with a smooth tale
Make a woman believe? Farewell, lusty widow. [*Exit.*]
Duch. Shall this move me? If all my royal kindred
Lay in my way unto this marriage,
I'd make them my low footsteps. And even now,
Even in this hate, as men in some great battles,
By apprehending danger, have achiev'd
Almost impossible actions (I have heard soldiers say so),
So I through frights and threat'nings will assay
This dangerous venture. Let old wives report
I wink'd and chose a husband. — Cariola,
To thy known secrecy I have given up
More than my life, — my fame.
Cari. Both shall be safe;
For I'll conceal this secret from the world
As warily as those that trade in poison
Keep poison from their children.
Duch. Thy protestation
Is ingenious and hearty; I believe it.
Is Antonio come?
Cari. He attends you.
Duch. Good dear soul,
Leave me; but place thyself behind the arras,
Where thou mayest overhear us. Wish me good speed;

For I am going into a wilderness,
Where I shall find nor path nor friendly clue
To be my guide.
[Cariola *goes behind the arras.*]

[*Enter* Antonio.]

I sent for you: sit down;
Take pen and ink, and write: are you ready?
Ant. Yes.
Duch. What did I say?
Ant. That I should write somewhat.
Duch. O, I remember.
After these triumphs and this large expense
It’s fit, like thrifty husbands, we inquire
What’s laid up for to-morrow.
Ant. So please your beauteous excellence.
Duch. Beauteous!
Indeed, I thank you. I look young for your sake;
You have ta’en my cares upon you.
Ant. I’ll fetch your grace
The particulars of your revenue and expense.
Duch. O, you are
An upright treasurer, but you mistook;
For when I said I meant to make inquiry
What’s laid up for to-morrow, I did mean
What’s laid up yonder for me.
Ant. Where?
Duch. In heaven.
I am making my will (as ’tis fit princes should,
In perfect memory), and, I pray, sir, tell me,
Were not one better make it smiling, thus,
Than in deep groans and terrible ghastly looks,
As if the gifts we parted with procur’d
That violent distraction?
Ant. O, much better.
Duch. If I had a husband now, this care were quit:
But I intend to make you overseer.
What good deed shall we first remember? Say.
Ant. Begin with that first good deed began i’ th’ world
After man’s creation, the sacrament of marriage.
I’d have you first provide for a good husband;
Give him all.
Duch. All!
Ant. Yes, your excellent self.
Duch. In a winding-sheet?
Ant. In a couple.
Duch. Saint Winifred, that were a strange will!
Ant. ’Twere stranger if there were no will in you
To marry again.
Duch. What do you think of marriage?
Ant. I take’t, as those that deny purgatory,
It locally contains or heaven or hell;
There’s no third place in’t.
Duch. How do you affect it?
Ant. My banishment, feeding my melancholy,
Would often reason thus: —
Duch. Pray, let’s hear it.
Ant. Say a man never marry, nor have children,
What takes that from him? Only the bare name
Of being a father, or the weak delight
To see the little wanton ride a-cock-horse
Upon a painted stick, or hear him chatter
Like a taught starling.
Duch. Fie, fie, what’s all this?
One of your eyes is blood-shot; use my ring to’t.
They say ’tis very sovereign. ’Twas my wedding-ring.
And I did vow never to part with it
But to my second husband.
Ant. You have parted with it now.
Duch. Yes, to help your eye-sight.
Ant. You have made me stark blind.
Duch. How?
Ant. There is a saucy and ambitious devil
Is dancing in this circle.
Duch. Remove him.
Ant. How?
Duch. There needs small conjuration, when your finger

May do it: thus. Is it fit?
([*She puts the ring upon his finger*]: *he kneels.*)
Ant. What said you?
Duch. Sir,
This goodly roof of yours is too low built;
I cannot stand upright in't nor discourse,
Without I raise it higher. Raise yourself;
Or, if you please, my hand to help you: so.
[*Raises him.*]
Ant. Ambition, madam, is a great man's madness,
That is not kept in chains and close-pent rooms,
But in fair lightsome lodgings, and is girt
With the wild noise of prattling visitants,
Which makes it lunatic beyond all cure.
Conceive not I am so stupid but I aim
Whereto your favours tend: but he's a fool
That, being a-cold, would thrust his hands i' th' fire
To warm them.
Duch. So, now the ground's broke,
You may discover what a wealthy mine
I make you lord of.
Ant. O my unworthiness!
Duch. You were ill to sell yourself:
This dark'ning of your worth is not like that
Which tradesmen use i' th' city; their false lights
Are to rid bad wares off: and I must tell you,
If you will know where breathes a complete man
(I speak it without flattery), turn your eyes,
And progress through yourself.
Ant. Were there nor heaven nor hell,
I should be honest: I have long serv'd virtue,
And nev'r ta'en wages of her.
Duch. Now she pays it.
The misery of us that are born great!
We are forc'd to woo, because none dare woo us;
And as a tyrant doubles with his words
And fearfully equivocates, so we
Are forc'd to express our violent passions
In riddles and in dreams, and leave the path
Of simple virtue, which was never made
To seem the thing it is not. Go, go brag
You have left me heartless; mine is in your bosom:
I hope 'twill multiply love there. You do tremble:
Make not your heart so dead a piece of flesh,
To fear more than to love me. Sir, be confident:
What is't distracts you? This is flesh and blood, sir;
'Tis not the figure cut in alabaster
Kneels at my husband's tomb. Awake, awake, man!
I do here put off all vain ceremony,
And only do appear to you a young widow
That claims you for her husband, and, like a widow,
I use but half a blush in't.
Ant. Truth speak for me;
I will remain the constant sanctuary
Of your good name.
Duch. I thank you, gentle love:
And 'cause you shall not come to me in debt,
Being now my steward, here upon your lips
I sign your *Quietus est.* This you should have begg'd now.
I have seen children oft eat sweetmeats thus,
As fearful to devour them too soon.
Ant. But for your brothers?
Duch. Do not think of them:
All discord without this circumference
Is only to be pitied, and not fear'd:
Yet, should they know it, time will easily
Scatter the tempest.
Ant. These words should be mine,
And all the parts you have spoke, if some part of it
Would not have savour'd flattery.
Duch. Kneel.
[Cariola *comes from behind the arras.*]
Ant. Ha!
Duch. Be not amaz'd: this woman's of my counsel.

I have heard lawyers say, a contract in a chamber
Per verba [*de*] *presenti* is absolute marriage. [*She and* Antonio *kneel.*]
Bless, heaven, this sacred gordian, which let violence
Never untwine.
Ant. And may our sweet affections, like the spheres,
Be still in motion!
Duch. Quick'ning, and make
The like soft music!
Ant. That we may imitate the loving palms,
Best emblem of a peaceful marriage,
That nev'r bore fruit, divided!
Duch. What can the church force more?
Ant. That fortune may not know an accident,
Either of joy or sorrow, to divide
Our fixed wishes!
Duch. How can the church build faster?
We now are man and wife, and 'tis the church
That must but echo this. — Maid, stand apart:
I now am blind.
Ant. What's your conceit in this?
Duch. I would have you lead your fortune by the hand
Unto your marriage-bed:
(You speak in me this, for we now are one.)
We'll only lie and talk together, and plot
T'appease my humorous kindred; and if you please,
Like the old tale in *Alexander and Lodowick*,
Lay a naked sword between us, keep us chaste.
O, let me shrowd my blushes in your bosom,
Since 'tis the treasury of all my secrets!
[*Exeunt* Duchess *and* Antonio.]
Cari. Whether the spirit of greatness or of woman
Reign most in her, I know not; but it shows
A fearful madness. I owe her much of pity. (*Exit.*)

ACT II.

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Bosola *and* Castruccio.)

Bos. You say you would fain be taken for an eminent courtier?

Cast. 'Tis the very main of my ambition.

Bos. Let me see: you have a reasonable good face for't already, and your night-cap expresses your ears sufficient largely. I would have you learn to twirl the strings of your band with a good grace, and in a set speech, at th' end of every sentence, to hum three or four times, or blow your nose till it smart again, to recover your memory. When you come to be a president in criminal causes, if you smile upon a prisoner, hang him; but if you frown upon him and threaten him, let him be sure to scape the gallows.

Cast. I would be a very merry president.

Bos. Do not sup o' nights; 'twill beget you an admirable wit.

Cast. Rather it would make me have a good stomach to quarrel; for they say, your roaring boys eat meat seldom, and that makes them so valiant. But how shall I know whether the people take me for an eminent fellow?

Bos. I will teach a trick to know it: give out you lie a-dying, and if you hear the common people curse you, be sure you are taken for one of the prime night-caps.

[*Enter an Old Lady.*]

You come from painting now.

Old Lady. From what?

Bos. Why, from your scurvy face-physic. To behold thee not painted inclines somewhat near a miracle. These in thy face here were deep ruts and foul sloughs the last progress. There was a lady in France that, having had the small-pox, flayed the skin off her face to make it more level; and whereas before she looked like a nutmeg-grater, after she resembled an abortive hedge-hog.

Old Lady. Do you call this painting?

Bos. No, no, but you call [it] careening of an old morphew'd lady, to make her disembogue again: there's rough-cast phrase to your plastic.

Old Lady. It seems you are well acquainted with my closet.

Bos. One would suspect it for a shop of witchcraft, to find in it the fat of serpents, spawn of snakes, Jews' spittle, and their young children's ordure; and all these for the face. I would sooner eat a dead pigeon taken from the soles of the feet of one sick of the plague, than kiss one of you fasting. Here are two of you, whose sin of your youth is the very patrimony of the physician; makes him renew his foot-cloth with the spring, and change his high-pric'd courtesan with the fall of the leaf. I do wonder you do not loathe yourselves. Observe my meditation now.

What thing is in this outward form of man
To be belov'd? We account it ominous,
If nature do produce a colt, or lamb,
A fawn, or goat, in any limb resembling
A man, and fly from't as a prodigy.
Man stands amaz'd to see his deformity
In any other creature but himself.
But in our own flesh though we bear diseases
Which have their true names only ta'en from beasts, —
As the most ulcerous wolf and swinish measle, —
Though we are eaten up of lice and worms,
And though continually we bear about us
A rotten and dead body, we delight
To hide it in rich tissue: all our fear,
Nay, all our terror, is, lest our physician
Should put us in the ground to be made sweet. —

Your wife's gone to Rome: you two couple, and get you to the wells at Lucca to recover your aches. I have other work on foot.

[*Exeunt* Castruccio *and Old Lady.*]

I observe our duchess
Is sick a-days, she pukes, her stomach seethes,
The fins of her eye-lids look most teeming blue,
She wanes i' th' cheek, and waxes fat i' th' flank,
And, contrary to our Italian fashion,
Wears a loose-bodied gown: there's somewhat in't.
I have a trick may chance discover it,
A pretty one; I have bought some apricocks,
The first our spring yields.

[*Enter* Antonio *and* Delio, *talking together apart.*]

Delio. And so long since married?
You amaze me.

Ant. Let me seal your lips for ever:
For, did I think that anything but th' air
Could carry these words from you, I should wish
You had no breath at all. — Now, sir, in your contemplation?
You are studying to become a great wise fellow.

Bos. O, sir, the opinion of wisdom is a foul tetter that runs all over a man's body: if simplicity direct us to have no evil, it directs us to a happy being; for the subtlest folly proceeds from the subtlest wisdom. Let me be simply honest.

Ant. I do understand your inside.

Bos. Do you so?

Ant. Because you would not seem to appear to th' world
Puff'd up with your preferment, you continue
This out-of-fashion melancholy: leave it, leave it.

Bos. Give me leave to be honest in any phrase, in any compliment whatsoever. Shall I confess myself to you? I look no higher than I can reach: they are the gods that must ride on winged horses. A lawyer's mule of a slow pace will both suit my disposition and business; for, mark me, when a man's mind rides faster than his horse can gallop, they quickly both tire.

Ant. You would look up to heaven, but I think
The devil, that rules i' th' air, stands in your light.

Bos. O, sir, you are lord of the ascendant, chief man with the duchess: a duke was your cousin-german remov'd. Say you were lineally descended from King Pepin, or he himself, what of this? Search the heads of the greatest rivers in the world, you shall find them but bubbles of water. Some would think the souls of princes were brought forth by some more weighty cause than those of meaner persons: they are deceiv'd, there's the same hand to them; the like passions sway them; the same reason that makes a vicar go to law for a tithe-pig, and undo his neighbours, makes them spoil a whole province, and batter down goodly cities with the cannon.

[*Enter* Duchess *and Ladies.*]

Duch. Your arm, Antonio: do I not grow fat?
I am exceeding short-winded. — Bosola,
I would have you, sir, provide for me a litter;
Such a one as the Duchess of Florence rode in.
Bos. The duchess us'd one when she was great with child.
Duch. I think she did. — Come hither, mend my ruff:
Here, when? thou art such a tedious lady; and
Thy breath smells of lemon-pills: wouldst thou hadst done!
Shall I swoon under thy fingers? I am
So troubled with the mother!
Bos. [*aside*]. I fear, too much.
Duch. I have heard you say that the French courtiers
Wear their hats on 'fore the king.
Ant. I have seen it.
Duch. In the presence?
Ant. Yes.
Duch. Why should not we bring up that fashion?
'Tis ceremony more than duty that consists
In the removing of a piece of felt.
Be you the example to the rest o' th' court;
Put on your hat first.
Ant. You must pardon me:
I have seen, in colder countries than in France,
Nobles stand bare to th' prince; and the distinction
Methought show'd reverently.
Bos. I have a present for your grace.
Duch. For me, sir?
Bos. Apricocks, madam.
Duch. O, sir, where are they?
I have heard of none to-year.
Bos. [*aside*]. Good; her colour rises.
Duch. Indeed, I thank you: they are wondrous fair ones.
What an unskilful fellow is our gardener!
We shall have none this month.
Bos. Will not your grace pare them?
Duch. No: they taste of musk, methinks; indeed they do.
Bos. I know not: yet I wish your grace had par'd 'em.
Duch. Why?
Bos. I forgot to tell you, the knave gardener,
Only to raise his profit by them the sooner,
Did ripen them in horse-dung.
Duch. O, you jest. —
You shall judge: pray, taste one.
Ant. Indeed, madam,
I do not love the fruit.
Duch. Sir, you are loth
To rob us of our dainties. 'Tis a delicate fruit;
They say they are restorative.
Bos. 'Tis a pretty art,
This grafting.
Duch. 'Tis so; a bett'ring of nature.
Bos. To make a pippin grow upon a crab,
A damson on a black-thorn. — [*Aside.*] How greedily she eats them!
A whirlwind strike off these bawd farthingales!
For, but for that and the loose-bodied gown,
I should have discover'd apparently
The young springal cutting a caper in her belly.
Duch. I thank you, Bosola: they were right good ones,
If they do not make me sick.
Ant. How, now, madam!
Duch. This green fruit and my stomach are not friends:

How they swell me!
Bos. [*aside*]. Nay, you are too much swell'd already.
Duch. O, I am in an extreme cold sweat!
Bos. I am very sorry. [*Exit.*]
Duch. Lights to my chamber! — O good Antonio,
I fear I am undone!
Delio. Lights there, lights!
(*Exeunt* Duchess [*and Ladies*].)
Ant. O my most trusty Delio, we are lost!
I fear she's fall'n in labour; and there's left
No time for her remove.
Delio. Have you prepar'd
Those ladies to attend her; and procur'd
That politic safe conveyance for the midwife
Your duchess plotted?
Ant. I have.
Delio. Make use, then, of this forc'd occasion.
Give out that Bosola hath poison'd her
With these apricocks; that will give some colour
For her keeping close.
Ant. Fie, fie, the physicians
Will then flock to her.
Delio. For that you may pretend
She'll use some prepar'd antidote of her own,
Lest the physicians should re-poison her.
Ant. I am lost in amazement: I know not what to think on't. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene II.

([*Enter*] Bosola *and Old Lady.*)

Bos. So, so, there's no question but her techiness and most vulturous eating of the apricocks are apparent signs of breeding. — Now?

Old Lady. I am in haste, sir.

Bos. There was a young waiting-woman had a monstrous desire to see the glass-house ——

Old Lady. Nay, pray, let me go.

Bos. And it was only to know what strange instrument it was should swell up a glass to the fashion of a woman's belly.

Old Lady. I will hear no more of the glass-house. You are still abusing women!

Bos. Who? I? No; only, by the way now and then, mention your frailties. The orange-tree bears ripe and green fruit and blossoms all together; and some of you give entertainment for pure love, but more for more precious reward. The lusty spring smells well; but drooping autumn tastes well. If we have the same golden showers that rained in the time of Jupiter the thunderer, you have the same Danäes still, to hold up their laps to receive them. Didst thou never study the mathematics?

Old Lady. What's that, sir?

Bos. Why, to know the trick how to make a many lines meet in one centre. Go, go, give your foster-daughters good counsel: tell them, that the devil take delight to hang at a woman's girdle, like a false rusty watch, that she cannot discern how the time passes.
[*Exit Old Lady.*]

[*Enter* Antonio, Roderigo, *and* Grisolan.]

Ant. Shut up the court-gates.
Rod. Why, sir? What's the danger?
Ant. Shut up the posterns presently, and call
All the officers o' th' court.
Gris. I shall instantly. [*Exit.*]
Ant. Who keeps the key o' th' park-gate?
Rod. Forobosco.
Ant. Let him bring 't presently.

[*Re-enter* Grisolan *with Servants.*]

1 Serv. O, gentleman o' th' court, the foulest treason!
Bos. [*aside*]. If that these apricocks should be poison'd now,
Without my knowledge?
1 Serv. There was taken even now a Switzer in the duchess' bed-chamber ——
2 Serv. A Switzer!
1 Serv. With a pistol in his great codpiece.
Bos. Ha, ha, ha!
1 Serv. The codpiece was the case for't.
2 Serv. There was a cunning traitor.

Who would have search'd his codpiece?
1 Serv. True; if he had kept out of the ladies' chambers. And all the moulds of his buttons were leaden bullets.
2 Serv. O wicked cannibal! A fire-lock in's codpiece!
1 Serv. 'Twas a French plot, upon my life.
2 Serv. To see what the devil can do!
Ant. [Are] all the officers here?
Servants. We are.
Ant. Gentlemen,
We have lost much plate you know; and but this evening
Jewels, to the value of four thousand ducats,
Are missing in the duchess' cabinet.
Are the gates shut?
Serv. Yes.
Ant. 'Tis the duchess' pleasure
Each officer be lock'd into his chamber
Till the sun-rising; and to send the keys
Of all their chests and of their outward doors
Into her bed-chamber. She is very sick.
Rod. At her pleasure.
Ant. She entreats you take't not ill: the innocent
Shall be the more approv'd by it.
Bos. Gentlemen o' th' wood-yard, where's your Switzer now?
1 Serv. By this hand, 'twas credibly reported by one o' th' black guard.
[*Exeunt all except* Antonio *and* Delio.]
Delio. How fares it with the duchess?
Ant. She's expos'd
Unto the worst of torture, pain, and fear.
Delio. Speak to her all happy comfort.
Ant. How I do play the fool with mine own danger!
You are this night, dear friend, to post to Rome:
My life lies in your service.
Delio. Do not doubt me.
Ant. O, 'tis far from me: and yet fear presents me
Somewhat that looks like danger.
Delio. Believe it,
'Tis but the shadow of your fear, no more.
How superstitiously we mind our evils!
The throwing down salt, or crossing of a hare,
Bleeding at nose, the stumbling of a horse,
Or singing of a cricket, are of power
To daunt whole man in us. Sir, fare you well:
I wish you all the joys of a bless'd father;
And, for my faith, lay this unto your breast, —
Old friends, like old swords, still are trusted best. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* Cariola.]

Cari. Sir, you are the happy father of a son:
Your wife commends him to you.
Ant. Blessed comfort! —
For heaven' sake, tend her well: I'll presently
Go set a figure for's nativity. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene III.

[*Enter* Bosola, *with a dark lantern.*]

Bos. Sure I did hear a woman shriek: list, ha!
And the sound came, if I receiv'd it right,
From the duchess' lodgings. There's some stratagem
In the confining all our courtiers
To their several wards: I must have part of it;
My intelligence will freeze else. List, again!
It may be 'twas the melancholy bird,
Best friend of silence and of solitariness,
The owl, that scream'd so. — Ha! Antonio!

[*Enter* Antonio *with a candle, his sword drawn.*]

Ant. I heard some noise. — Who's there? What art thou? Speak.
Bos. Antonio, put not your face nor body
To such a forc'd expression of fear;
I am Bosola, your friend.
Ant. Bosola! —
[*Aside.*] This mole does undermine me. — Heard you not
A noise even now?
Bos. From whence?

Ant. From the duchess' lodging.
Bos. Not I: did you?
Ant. I did, or else I dream'd.
Bos. Let's walk towards it.
Ant. No: it may be 'twas
But the rising of the wind.
Bos. Very likely.
Methinks 'tis very cold, and yet you sweat:
You look wildly.
Ant. I have been setting a figure
For the duchess' jewels.
Bos. Ah, and how falls your question?
Do you find it radical?
Ant. What's that to you?
'Tis rather to be question'd what design,
When all men were commanded to their lodgings,
Makes you a night-walker.
Bos. In sooth, I'll tell you:
Now all the court's asleep, I thought the devil
Had least to do here; I came to say my prayers;
And if it do offend you I do so,
You are a fine courtier.
Ant. [*aside*]. This fellow will undo me, —
You gave the duchess apricocks to-day:
Pray heaven they were not poison'd!
Bos. Poison'd! a Spanish fig
For the imputation!
Ant. Traitors are ever confident
Till they are discover'd. There were jewels stol'n too:
In my conceit, none are to be suspected
More than yourself.
Bos. You are a false steward.
Ant. Saucy slave, I'll pull thee up by the roots.
Bos. May be the ruin will crush you to pieces.
Ant. You are an impudent snake indeed, sir:
Are you scarce warm, and do you show your sting?
You libel well, sir?
Bos. No, sir: copy it out,
And I will set my hand to't.
Ant. [*aside*]. My nose bleeds.
One that were superstitious would count
This ominous, when it merely comes by chance.
Two letters, that are wrought here for my name,
Are drown'd in blood!
Mere accident. — For you, sir, I'll take order
I' th' morn you shall be safe. — [*Aside.*] 'Tis that must colour
Her lying-in. — Sir, this door you pass not:
I do not hold it fit that you come near
The duchess' lodgings, till you have quit yourself. —
[*Aside.*] The great are like the base, nay, they are the same,
When they seek shameful ways to avoid shame. (*Exit.*)
Bos. Antonio hereabout did drop a paper: —
Some of your help, false friend. — O, here it is.
What's here? a child's nativity calculated!
[*Reads.*]

'*The duchess was deliver'd of a son, 'tween the hours twelve and one in the night, Anno Dom.* 1504.' — that's this year — '*decimo nono Decembris,*' — that's this night — '*taken according to the meridian of Malfi,*' — that's our duchess: happy discovery! — '*The lord of the first house being combust in the ascendant signifies short life; and Mars being in a human sign, joined to the tail of the Dragon, in the eighth house, doth threaten a violent death. Caetera non scrutantur.*'

Why, now 'tis most apparent; this precise fellow
Is the duchess' bawd: — I have it to my wish!
This is a parcel of intelligency
Our courtiers were cas'd up for: it needs must follow
That I must be committed on pretence
Of poisoning her; which I'll endure, and laugh at.
If one could find the father now! but that
Time will discover. Old Castruccio
I' th' morning posts to Rome: by him I'll send
A letter that shall make her brothers' galls
O'erflow their livers. This was a thrifty way!

Though Lust do mask in ne'er so strange disguise,
She's oft found witty, but is never wise.
[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

([*Enter*] CARDINAL *and* JULIA.)

CARD. Sit: thou art my best of wishes. Prithee, tell me
What trick didst thou invent to come to Rome
Without thy husband?
JULIA. Why, my lord, I told him
I came to visit an old anchorite
Here for devotion.
CARD. Thou art a witty false one, —
I mean, to him.
JULIA. You have prevail'd with me
Beyond my strongest thoughts; I would not now
Find you inconstant.
CARD. Do not put thyself
To such a voluntary torture, which proceeds
Out of your own guilt.
JULIA. How, my lord!
CARD. You fear
My constancy, because you have approv'd
Those giddy and wild turnings in yourself.
JULIA. Did you e'er find them?
CARD. Sooth, generally for women,
A man might strive to make glass malleable,
Ere he should make them fixed.
JULIA. So, my lord.
CARD. We had need go borrow that fantastic glass
Invented by Galileo the Florentine
To view another spacious world i' th' moon,
And look to find a constant woman there.
JULIA. This is very well, my lord.
CARD. Why do you weep?
Are tears your justification? The self-same tears
Will fall into your husband's bosom, lady,
With a loud protestation that you love him
Above the world. Come, I'll love you wisely,
That's jealously; since I am very certain
You cannot make me cuckold.
JULIA. I'll go home
To my husband.
CARD. You may thank me, lady,
I have taken you off your melancholy perch,
Bore you upon my fist, and show'd you game,
And let you fly at it. — I pray thee, kiss me. —
When thou wast with thy husband, thou wast watch'd
Like a tame elephant: — still you are to thank me: —
Thou hadst only kisses from him and high feeding;
But what delight was that? 'Twas just like one
That hath a little fing'ring on the lute,
Yet cannot tune it: — still you are to thank me.
JULIA. You told me of a piteous wound i' th' heart,
And a sick liver, when you woo'd me first,
And spake like one in physic.
CARD. Who's that? ——

[*Enter Servant.*]

Rest firm for my affection to thee,
Lightning moves slow to't.
SERV. Madam, a gentleman
That's come post from Malfi, desires to see you.
CARD. Let him enter: I'll withdraw.
(*Exit.*)
SERV. He says
Your husband, old Castruccio, is come to Rome,
Most pitifully tir'd with riding post.
[*Exit.*]

[*Enter* DELIO.]

JULIA [*aside*]. Signior Delio! 'tis one of my old suitors.
DELIO. I was bold to come and see you.
JULIA. Sir, you are welcome.
DELIO. Do you lie here?
JULIA. Sure, your own experience
Will satisfy you no: our Roman prelates
Do not keep lodging for ladies.

Delio. Very well:
I have brought you no commendations from your husband,
For I know none by him.
Julia. I hear he's come to Rome.
Delio. I never knew man and beast, of a horse and a knight,
So weary of each other. If he had had a good back,
He would have undertook to have borne his horse,
His breech was so pitifully sore.
Julia. Your laughter
Is my pity.
Delio. Lady, I know not whether
You want money, but I have brought you some.
Julia. From my husband?
Delio. No, from mine own allowance.
Julia. I must hear the condition, ere I be bound to take it.
Delio. Look on't, 'tis gold; hath it not a fine colour?
Julia. I have a bird more beautiful.
Delio. Try the sound on't.
Julia. A lute-string far exceeds it.
It hath no smell, like cassia or civet;
Nor is it physical, though some fond doctors
Persuade us seethe't in cullises. I'll tell you,
This is a creature bred by ——

[Re-enter Servant.]

Serv. Your husband's come,
Hath deliver'd a letter to the Duke of Calabria
That, to my thinking, hath put him out of his wits. (*Exit.*)
Julia. Sir, you hear:
Pray, let me know your business and your suit
As briefly as can be.
Delio. With good speed: I would wish you,
At such time as you are non-resident
With your husband, my mistress.
Julia. Sir, I'll go ask my husband if I shall,
And straight return your answer. (*Exit.*)
Delio. Very fine!
Is this her wit, or honesty, that speaks thus?
I heard one say the duke was highly mov'd
With a letter sent from Malfi. I do fear
Antonio is betray'd. How fearfully
Shows his ambition now! Unfortunate fortune!
They pass through whirl-pools, and deep woes do shun,
Who the event weigh ere the action's done.

Scene V.

([*Enter*] Cardinal *and* Ferdinand *with a letter.*)

Ferd. I have this night digg'd up a mandrake.
Card. Say you?
Ferd. And I am grown mad with't.
Card. What's the prodigy?
Ferd. Read there, — a sister damn'd: she's loose i' th' hilts;
Grown a notorious strumpet.
Card. Speak lower.
Ferd. Lower!
Rogues do not whisper't now, but seek to publish't
(As servants do the bounty of their lords)
Aloud; and with a covetous searching eye,
To mark who note them. O, confusion seize her!
She hath had most cunning bawds to serve her turn,
And more secure conveyances for lust
Than towns of garrison for service.
Card. Is't possible?
Can this be certain?
Ferd. Rhubarb, O, for rhubarb
To purge this choler! Here's the cursed day
To prompt my memory; and here't shall stick
Till of her bleeding heart I make a sponge
To wipe it out.
Card. Why do you make yourself
So wild a tempest?
Ferd. Would I could be one,
That I might toss her palace 'bout her ears,

Root up her goodly forests, blast her meads,
And lay her general territory as waste
As she hath done her honours.
Card. Shall our blood,
The royal blood of Arragon and Castile,
Be thus attainted?
Ferd. Apply desperate physic:
We must not now use balsamum, but fire,
The smarting cupping-glass, for that's the mean
To purge infected blood, such blood as hers.
There is a kind of pity in mine eye, —
I'll give it to my handkercher; and now 'tis here,
I'll bequeath this to her bastard.
Card. What to do?
Ferd. Why, to make soft lint for his mother's wounds,
When I have hew'd her to pieces.
Card. Curs'd creature!
Unequal nature, to place women's hearts
So far upon the left side!
Ferd. Foolish men,
That e'er will trust their honour in a bark
Made of so slight weak bulrush as is woman,
Apt every minute to sink it!
Card. Thus ignorance, when it hath purchas'd honour,
It cannot wield it.
Ferd. Methinks I see her laughing, —
Excellent hyena! Talk to me somewhat quickly,
Or my imagination will carry me
To see her in the shameful act of sin.
Card. With whom?
Ferd. Happily with some strong-thigh'd bargeman,
Or one o' th' wood-yard that can quoit the sledge
Or toss the bar, or else some lovely squire
That carries coals up to her privy lodgings.
Card. You fly beyond your reason.
Ferd. Go to, mistress!
'Tis not your whore's milk that shall quench my wild-fire,
But your whore's blood.
Card. How idly shows this rage, which carries you,
As men convey'd by witches through the air,
On violent whirlwinds! This intemperate noise
Fitly resembles deaf men's shrill discourse,
Who talk aloud, thinking all other men
To have their imperfection.
Ferd. Have not you
My palsy?
Card. Yes, [but] I can be angry
Without this rupture. There is not in nature
A thing that makes man so deform'd, so beastly,
As doth intemperate anger. Chide yourself.
You have divers men who never yet express'd
Their strong desire of rest but by unrest,
By vexing of themselves. Come, put yourself
In tune.
Ferd. So I will only study to seem
The thing I am not. I could kill her now,
In you, or in myself; for I do think
It is some sin in us heaven doth revenge
By her.
Card. Are you stark mad?
Ferd. I would have their bodies
Burnt in a coal-pit with the ventage stopp'd,
That their curs'd smoke might not ascend to heaven;
Or dip the sheets they lie in in pitch or sulphur,
Wrap them in't, and then light them like a match;
Or else to-boil their bastard to a cullis,
And give 't his lecherous father to renew
The sin of his back.
Card. I'll leave you.
Ferd. Nay, I have done.
I am confident, had I been damn'd in hell,
And should have heard of this, it would have put me
Into a cold sweat. In, in; I'll go sleep.
Till I know who leaps my sister, I'll not stir:
That known, I'll find scorpions to string my whips,
And fix her in a general eclipse. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT III.

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Antonio *and* Delio.)

Ant. Our noble friend, my most beloved Delio!
O, you have been a stranger long at court:
Came you along with the Lord Ferdinand?
Delio. I did, sir: and how fares your noble duchess?
Ant. Right fortunately well: she's an excellent
Feeder of pedigrees; since you last saw her,
She hath had two children more, a son and daughter.
Delio. Methinks 'twas yesterday. Let me but wink,
And not behold your face, which to mine eye
Is somewhat leaner, verily I should dream
It were within this half hour.
Ant. You have not been in law, friend Delio,
Nor in prison, nor a suitor at the court,
Nor begg'd the reversion of some great man's place,
Nor troubled with an old wife, which doth make
Your time so insensibly hasten.
Delio. Pray, sir, tell me,
Hath not this news arriv'd yet to the ear
Of the lord cardinal?
Ant. I fear it hath:
The Lord Ferdinand, that's newly come to court,
Doth bear himself right dangerously.
Delio. Pray, why?
Ant. He is so quiet that he seems to sleep
The tempest out, as dormice do in winter.
Those houses that are haunted are most still
Till the devil be up.
Delio. What say the common people?
Ant. The common rabble do directly say
She is a strumpet.
Delio. And your graver heads
Which would be politic, what censure they?
Ant. They do observe I grow to infinite purchase,
The left hand way; and all suppose the duchess
Would amend it, if she could; for, say they,
Great princes, though they grudge their officers
Should have such large and unconfined means
To get wealth under them, will not complain,
Lest thereby they should make them odious
Unto the people. For other obligation
Of love or marriage between her and me
They never dream of.
Delio. The Lord Ferdinand
Is going to bed.

[*Enter* Duchess, Ferdinand, *and Attendants.*]

Ferd. I'll instantly to bed,
For I am weary. — I am to bespeak
A husband for you.
Duch. For me, sir! Pray, who is't?
Ferd. The great Count Malatesti.
Duch. Fie upon him!
A count! He's a mere stick of sugar-candy;
You may look quite through him. When I choose
A husband, I will marry for your honour.
Ferd. You shall do well in't. — How is't, worthy Antonio?
Duch. But sir, I am to have private conference with you
About a scandalous report is spread
Touching mine honour.
Ferd. Let me be ever deaf to't:
One of Pasquil's paper-bullets, court-calumny,
A pestilent air, which princes' palaces
Are seldom purg'd of. Yet, say that it were true,
I pour it in your bosom, my fix'd love
Would strongly excuse, extenuate, nay, deny
Faults, were they apparent in you. Go, be safe
In your own innocency.
Duch. [*aside*]. O bless'd comfort!

This deadly air is purg'd.
(*Exeunt* [Duchess, Antonio, Delio, *and Attendants*].)
Ferd. Her guilt treads on
Hot-burning coulters.

[*Enter* Bosola.]

Now, Bosola,
How thrives our intelligence?
Bos. Sir, uncertainly:
'Tis rumour'd she hath had three bastards, but
By whom we may go read i' th' stars.
Ferd. Why, some
Hold opinion all things are written there.
Bos. Yes, if we could find spectacles to read them.
I do suspect there hath been some sorcery
Us'd on the duchess.
Ferd. Sorcery! to what purpose?
Bos. To make her dote on some desertless fellow
She shames to acknowledge.
Ferd. Can your faith give way
To think there's power in potions or in charms,
To make us love whether we will or no?
Bos. Most certainly.
Ferd. Away! these are mere gulleries, horrid things,
Invented by some cheating mountebanks
To abuse us. Do you think that herbs or charms
Can force the will? Some trials have been made
In this foolish practice, but the ingredients
Were lenitive poisons, such as are of force
To make the patient mad; and straight the witch
Swears by equivocation they are in love.
The witch-craft lies in her rank blood. This night
I will force confession from her. You told me
You had got, within these two days, a false key
Into her bed-chamber.
Bos. I have.
Ferd. As I would wish.
Bos. What do you intend to do?
Ferd. Can you guess?
Bos. No.
Ferd. Do not ask, then:
He that can compass me, and know my drifts,
May say he hath put a girdle 'bout the world,
And sounded all her quick-sands.
Bos. I do not
Think so.
Ferd. What do you think, then, pray?
Bos. That you
Are your own chronicle too much, and grossly
Flatter yourself.
Ferd. Give me thy hand; I thank thee:
I never gave pension but to flatterers,
Till I entertained thee. Farewell.
That friend a great man's ruin strongly checks,
Who rails into his belief all his defects.
(*Exeunt.*)

Scene II.

(*Enter* Duchess, Antonio, *and* Cariola.)

Duch. Bring me the casket hither, and the glass. —
You get no lodging here to-night, my lord.
Ant. Indeed, I must persuade one.
Duch. Very good:
I hope in time 'twill grow into a custom,
That noblemen shall come with cap and knee
To purchase a night's lodging of their wives.
Ant. I must lie here.
Duch. Must! You are a lord of mis-rule.
Ant. Indeed, my rule is only in the night.
Duch. To what use will you put me?
Ant. We'll sleep together.
Duch. Alas, what pleasure can two lovers find in sleep?
Cari. My lord, I lie with her often, and I know
She'll much disquiet you.
Ant. See, you are complain'd of.
Cari. For she's the sprawling'st bedfellow.
Ant. I shall like her the better for that.
Cari. Sir, shall I ask you a question?

Ant. I pray thee, Cariola.
Cari. Wherefore still when you lie with my lady
Do you rise so early?
Ant. Labouring men
Count the clock oft'nest, Cariola,
Are glad when their task's ended.
Duch. I'll stop your mouth. [*Kisses him.*]
Ant. Nay, that's but one; Venus had two soft doves
To draw her chariot; I must have another. — [*She kisses him again.*]
When wilt thou marry, Cariola?
Cari. Never, my lord.
Ant. O, fie upon this single life! forgo it.
We read how Daphne, for her peevish [flight,]
Became a fruitless bay-tree; Syrinx turn'd
To the pale empty reed; Anaxarete
Was frozen into marble: whereas those
Which married, or prov'd kind unto their friends,
Were by a gracious influence trans-shap'd
Into the olive, pomegranate, mulberry,
Became flowers, precious stones, or eminent stars.
Cari. This is a vain poetry: but I pray you, tell me,
If there were propos'd me, wisdom, riches, and beauty,
In three several young men, which should I choose?
Ant. 'Tis a hard question. This was Paris' case,
And he was blind in't, and there was a great cause;
For how was't possible he could judge right,
Having three amorous goddesses in view,
And they stark naked? 'Twas a motion
Were able to benight the apprehension
Of the severest counsellor of Europe.
Now I look on both your faces so well form'd,
It puts me in mind of a question I would ask.
Cari. What is't?
Ant. I do wonder why hard-favour'd ladies,
For the most part, keep worse-favour'd waiting-women
To attend them, and cannot endure fair ones.
Duch. O, that's soon answer'd.
Did you ever in your life know an ill painter
Desire to have his dwelling next door to the shop
Of an excellent picture-maker? 'Twould disgrace
His face-making, and undo him. I prithee,
When were we so merry? My hair tangles.
Ant. Pray thee, Cariola, let's steal forth the room,
And let her talk to herself: I have divers times
Serv'd her the like, when she hath chaf'd extremely.
I love to see her angry. Softly, Cariola.
(*Exeunt* [Antonio *and* Cariola].)
Duch. Doth not the colour of my hair 'gin to change?
When I wax gray, I shall have all the court
Powder their hair with arras, to be like me.
You have cause to love me; I ent'red you into my heart

[*Enter* Ferdinand *unseen.*]

Before you would vouchsafe to call for the keys.
We shall one day have my brothers take you napping.
Methinks his presence, being now in court,
Should make you keep your own bed; but you'll say
Love mixt with fear is sweetest. I'll assure you,
You shall get no more children till my brothers
Consent to be your gossips. Have you lost your tongue?
'Tis welcome:
For know, whether I am doom'd to live or die,
I can do both like a prince.
Ferd. Die, then, quickly.
(*Giving her a poniard.*)
Virtue, where art thou hid? What hideous thing
Is it that doth eclipse thee?
Duch. Pray, sir, hear me.

Ferd. Or is it true thou art but a bare name,
And no essential thing?
Duch. Sir ——
Ferd. Do not speak.
Duch. No, sir:
I will plant my soul in mine ears, to hear you.
Ferd. O most imperfect light of human reason,
That mak'st [us] so unhappy to foresee
What we can least prevent! Pursue thy wishes,
And glory in them: there's in shame no comfort
But to be past all bounds and sense of shame.
Duch. I pray, sir, hear me: I am married.
Ferd. So!
Duch. Happily, not to your liking: but for that,
Alas, your shears do come untimely now
To clip the bird's wings that's already flown!
Will you see my husband?
Ferd. Yes, if I could change
Eyes with a basilisk.
Duch. Sure, you came hither
By his confederacy.
Ferd. The howling of a wolf
Is music to thee, screech-owl: prithee, peace. —
Whate'er thou art that hast enjoy'd my sister,
For I am sure thou hear'st me, for thine own sake
Let me not know thee. I came hither prepar'd
To work thy discovery; yet am now persuaded
It would beget such violent effects
As would damn us both. I would not for ten millions
I had beheld thee: therefore use all means
I never may have knowledge of thy name;
Enjoy thy lust still, and a wretched life,
On that condition. — And for thee, vild woman,
If thou do wish thy lecher may grow old
In thy embracements, I would have thee build
Such a room for him as our anchorites
To holier use inhabit. Let not the sun
Shine on him till he's dead; let dogs and monkeys
Only converse with him, and such dumb things
To whom nature denies use to sound his name;
Do not keep a paraquito, lest she learn it;
If thou do love him, cut out thine own tongue,
Lest it bewray him.
Duch. Why might not I marry?
I have not gone about in this to create
Any new world or custom.
Ferd. Thou art undone;
And thou hast ta'en that massy sheet of lead
That hid thy husband's bones, and folded it
About my heart.
Duch. Mine bleeds for't.
Ferd. Thine! thy heart!
What should I name't, unless a hollow bullet
Fill'd with unquenchable wild-fire?
Duch. You are in this
Too strict; and were you not my princely brother,
I would say, too wilful: my reputation
Is safe.
Ferd. Dost thou know what reputation is?
I'll tell thee, — to small purpose, since th' instruction
Comes now too late.
Upon a time Reputation, Love, and Death,
Would travel o'er the world; and it was concluded
That they should part, and take three several ways.
Death told them, they should find him in great battles,
Or cities plagu'd with plagues; Love gives them counsel
To inquire for him 'mongst unambitious shepherds,
Where dowries were not talk'd of and sometimes
'Mongst quiet kindred that had nothing left

By their dead parents: 'Stay,' quoth Reputation,
'Do not forsake me; for it is my nature,
If once I part from any man I meet,
I am never found again.' And so for you:
You have shook hands with Reputation,
And made him invisible. So, fare you well:
I will never see you more.
Duch. Why should only I,
Of all the other princes of the world,
Be cas'd up, like a holy relic? I have youth
And a little beauty.
Ferd. So you have some virgins
That are witches. I will never see thee more. (*Exit.*)

(*Re-enter* Antonio *with a pistol,* [*and* Cariola].)

Duch. You saw this apparition?
Ant. Yes: we are
Betray'd. How came he hither? I should turn
This to thee, for that.
Cari. Pray, sir, do; and when
That you have cleft my heart, you shall read there
Mine innocence.
Duch. That gallery gave him entrance.
Ant. I would this terrible thing would come again,
That, standing on my guard, I might relate
My warrantable love. —
(*She shows the poniard.*)
Ha! what means this?
Duch. He left this with me.
Ant. And it seems did wish
You would use it on yourself.
Duch. His action seem'd
To intend so much.
Ant. This hath a handle to't,
As well as a point: turn it towards him, and
So fasten the keen edge in his rank gall.
[*Knocking within.*]
How now! who knocks? More earthquakes?
Duch. I stand
As if a mine beneath my feet were ready
To be blown up.
Cari. 'Tis Bosola.
Duch. Away!
O misery! methinks unjust actions
Should wear these masks and curtains, and not we.
You must instantly part hence: I have fashion'd it already.
(*Exit* Antonio.)

[*Enter* Bosola.]

Bos. The duke your brother is ta'en up in a whirlwind;
Hath took horse, and's rid post to Rome.
Duch. So late?
Bos. He told me, as he mounted into th' saddle,
You were undone.
Duch. Indeed, I am very near it.
Bos. What's the matter?
Duch. Antonio, the master of our household,
Hath dealt so falsely with me in's accounts.
My brother stood engag'd with me for money
Ta'en up of certain Neapolitan Jews,
And Antonio lets the bonds be forfeit.
Bos. Strange! — [*Aside.*] This is cunning.
Duch. And hereupon
My brother's bills at Naples are protested
Against. — Call up our officers.
Bos. I shall. (*Exit.*)

[*Re-enter* Antonio.]

Duch. The place that you must fly to is Ancona:
Hire a house there; I'll send after you
My treasure and my jewels. Our weak safety
Runs upon enginous wheels: short syllables
Must stand for periods. I must now accuse you
Of such a feigned crime as Tasso calls
Magnanima menzogna, a noble lie,
'Cause it must shield our honours. — Hark! they are coming.

[*Re-enter* Bosola *and Officers.*]

Ant. Will your grace hear me?
Duch. I have got well by you; you have yielded me
A million of loss: I am like to inherit

The people's curses for your stewardship.
You had the trick in audit-time to be sick,
Till I had sign'd your quietus; and that cur'd you
Without help of a doctor. — Gentlemen,
I would have this man be an example to you all;
So shall you hold my favour; I pray, let him;
For h'as done that, alas, you would not think of,
And, because I intend to be rid of him,
I mean not to publish. — Use your fortune elsewhere.

Ant. I am strongly arm'd to brook my overthrow,
As commonly men bear with a hard year.
I will not blame the cause on't; but do think
The necessity of my malevolent star
Procures this, not her humour. O, the inconstant
And rotten ground of service! You may see,
'Tis even like him, that in a winter night,
Takes a long slumber o'er a dying fire,
A-loth to part from 't; yet parts thence as cold
As when he first sat down.

Duch. We do confiscate,
Towards the satisfying of your accounts,
All that you have.

Ant. I am all yours; and 'tis very fit
All mine should be so.

Duch. So, sir, you have your pass.

Ant. You may see, gentlemen, what 'tis to serve
A prince with body and soul. (*Exit.*)

Bos. Here's an example for extortion: what moisture is drawn out of the sea, when foul weather comes, pours down, and runs into the sea again.

Duch. I would know what are your opinions
Of this Antonio.

2 Off. He could not abide to see a pig's head gaping: I thought your grace would find him a Jew.

3 Off. I would you had been his officer, for your own sake.

4 Off. You would have had more money.

1 Off. He stopp'd his ears with black wool, and to those came to him for money said he was thick of hearing.

2 Off. Some said he was an hermaphrodite, for he could not abide a woman.

4 Off. How scurvy proud he would look when the treasury was full! Well, let him go.

1 Off. Yes, and the chippings of the buttery fly after him, to scour his gold chain.

Duch. Leave us. ——

(*Exeunt* [*Officers*].)

What do you think of these?

Bos. That these are rogues that in's prosperity,
But to have waited on his fortune, could have wish'd
His dirty stirrup riveted through their noses,
And follow'd after's mule, like a bear in a ring;
Would have prostituted their daughters to his lust;
Made their first-born intelligencers; thought none happy
But such as were born under his blest planet,
And wore his livery: and do these lice drop off now?
Well, never look to have the like again:
He hath left a sort of flatt'ring rogues behind him;
Their doom must follow. Princes pay flatterers
In their own money: flatterers dissemble their vices,
And they dissemble their lies; that's justice.
Alas, poor gentleman!

Duch. Poor! he hath amply fill'd his coffers.

Bos. Sure, he was too honest. Pluto, the god of riches,
When he's sent by Jupiter to any man,
He goes limping, to signify that wealth
That comes on God's name comes slowly; but when he's sent
On the devil's errand, he rides post and comes in by scuttles.

Let me show you what a most unvalu'd jewel
You have in a wanton humour thrown away,
To bless the man shall find him. He was an excellent
Courtier and most faithful; a soldier that thought it
As beastly to know his own value too little
As devilish to acknowledge it too much.
Both his virtue and form deserv'd a far better fortune:
His discourse rather delighted to judge itself than show itself:
His breast was fill'd with all perfection,
And yet it seem'd a private whisp'ring-room,
It made so little noise of't.

Duch. But he was basely descended.

Bos. Will you make yourself a mercenary herald,
Rather to examine men's pedigrees than virtues?
You shall want him:
For know an honest statesman to a prince
Is like a cedar planted by a spring;
The spring bathes the tree's root, the grateful tree
Rewards it with his shadow: you have not done so.
I would sooner swim to the Bermoothes on
Two politicians' rotten bladders, tied
Together with an intelligencer's heart-string,
Than depend on so changeable a prince's favour.
Fare thee well, Antonio! Since the malice of the world
Would needs down with thee, it cannot be said yet
That any ill happen'd unto thee, considering thy fall
Was accompanied with virtue.

Duch. O, you render me excellent music!

Bos. Say you?

Duch. This good one that you speak of is my husband.

Bos. Do I not dream? Can this ambitious age
Have so much goodness in't as to prefer
A man merely for worth, without these shadows
Of wealth and painted honours? Possible?

Duch. I have had three children by him.

Bos. Fortunate lady!
For you have made your private nuptial bed
The humble and fair seminary of peace,
No question but: many an unbenefic'd scholar
Shall pray for you for this deed, and rejoice
That some preferment in the world can yet
Arise from merit. The virgins of your land
That have no dowries shall hope your example
Will raise them to rich husbands. Should you want
Soldiers, 'twould make the very Turks and Moors
Turn Christians, and serve you for this act.
Last, the neglected poets of your time,
In honour of this trophy of a man,
Rais'd by that curious engine, your white hand,
Shall thank you in your grave for't, and make that
More reverend than all the cabinets
Of living princes. For Antonio,
His fame shall likewise flow from many a pen,
When heralds shall want coats to sell to men.

Duch. As I taste comfort in this friendly speech,
So would I find concealment.

Bos. O, the secret of my prince,
Which I will wear on th' inside of my heart!

Duch. You shall take charge of all my coin and jewels,
And follow him; for he retires himself
To Ancona.

Bos. So.

Duch. Whither, within few days,
I mean to follow thee.

Bos. Let me think:
I would wish your grace to feign a pilgrimage
To our Lady of Loretto, scarce seven leagues
From fair Ancona; so may you depart

Your country with more honour, and your flight
Will seem a princely progress, retaining
Your usual train about you.
Duch. Sir, your direction
Shall lead me by the hand.
Cari. In my opinion,
She were better progress to the baths at Lucca,
Or go visit the Spa
In Germany; for, if you will believe me,
I do not like this jesting with religion,
This feigned pilgrimage.
Duch. Thou art a superstitious fool:
Prepare us instantly for our departure.
Past sorrows, let us moderately lament them,
For those to come, seek wisely to prevent them.
[*Exeunt* Duchess *and* Cariola.]
Bos. A politician is the devil's quilted anvil;
He fashions all sins on him, and the blows
Are never heard: he may work in a lady's chamber,
As here for proof. What rests but I reveal
All to my lord? O, this base quality
Of intelligencer! Why, every quality i' th' world
Prefers but gain or commendation:
Now, for this act I am certain to be rais'd,
And men that paint weeds to the life are prais'd. (*Exit.*)

Scene III.

([*Enter*] Cardinal, Ferdinand, Malatesti, Pescara, Delio, *and* Silvio.)

Card. Must we turn soldier, then?
Mal. The emperor,
Hearing your worth that way, ere you attain'd
This reverend garment, joins you in commission
With the right fortunate soldier the Marquis of Pescara,
And the famous Lannoy.
Card. He that had the honour
Of taking the French king prisoner?
Mal. The same.
Here's a plot drawn for a new fortification
At Naples.
Ferd. This great Count Malatesti, I perceive,
Hath got employment?
Delio. No employment, my lord;
A marginal note in the muster-book that he is
A voluntary lord.
Ferd. He's no soldier?
Delio. He has worn gun-powder in's hollow tooth for the tooth-ache.
Sil. He comes to the leaguer with a full intent
To eat fresh beef and garlic, means to stay
Till the scent be gone, and straight return to court.
Delio. He hath read all the late service
As the City Chronicle relates it;
And keeps two pewterers going, only to express
Battles in model.
Sil. Then he'll fight by the book.
Delio. By the almanac, I think,
To choose good days and shun the critical;
That's his mistress' scarf.
Sil. Yes, he protests
He would do much for that taffeta.
Delio. I think he would run away from a battle,
To save it from taking prisoner.
Sil. He is horribly afraid
Gun-powder will spoil the perfume on't.
Delio. I saw a Dutchman break his pate once
For calling him a pot-gun; he made his head
Have a bore in't like a musket.
Sil. I would he had made a touch-hole to't.
He is indeed a guarded sumpter-cloth,
Only for the remove of the court.

[*Enter* Bosola.]

Pes. Bosola arriv'd! What should be the business?
Some falling-out among the cardinals.
These factions amongst great men, they are like
Foxes, when their heads are divided,
They carry fire in their tails, and all the country
About them goes to wrack for 't.

Sil. What's that Bosola?

Delio. I knew him in Padua, — a fantastical scholar, like such who study to know how many knots was in Hercules' club, of what colour Achilles' beard was, or whether Hector were not troubled with the tooth-ache. He hath studied himself half blear-ey'd to know the true symmetry of Caesar's nose by a shoeing-horn; and this he did to gain the name of a speculative man.

Pes. Mark Prince Ferdinand:
A very salamander lives in's eye,
To mock the eager violence of fire.

Sil. That cardinal hath made more bad faces with his oppression than ever Michael Angelo made good ones. He lifts up's nose, like a foul porpoise before a storm.

Pes. The Lord Ferdinand laughs.

Delio. Like a deadly cannon
That lightens ere it smokes.

Pes. These are your true pangs of death,
The pangs of life, that struggle with great statesmen.

Delio. In such a deformed silence witches whisper their charms.

Card. Doth she make religion her riding-hood
To keep her from the sun and tempest?

Ferd. That, that damns her. Methinks her fault and beauty,
Blended together, show like leprosy,
The whiter the fouler. I make it a question
Whether her beggarly brats were ever christ'ned.

Card. I will instantly solicit the state of Ancona
To have them banish'd.

Ferd. You are for Loretto:
I shall not be at your ceremony, fare you well —
Write to the Duke of Malfi, my young nephew,
She had by her first husband, and acquaint him
With's mother's honesty.

Bos. I will.

Ferd. Antonio!
A slave that only smell'd of ink and counters,
And nev'r in's life look'd like a gentleman,
But in the audit-time. — Go, go presently,
Draw me out an hundred and fifty of our horse,
And meet me at the foot-bridge. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene IV.

([*Enter*] *Two Pilgrims to the Shrine of our Lady of Loretto.*)

1 Pil. I have not seen a goodlier shrine than this;
Yet I have visited many.

2 Pil. The Cardinal of Arragon
Is this day to resign his cardinal's hat;
His sister duchess likewise is arriv'd
To pay her vow of pilgrimage. I expect
A noble ceremony.

1 Pil. No question. — They come.

[*Here the ceremony of the Cardinal's instalment in the habit of a soldier perform'd in delivering up his cross, hat, robes, and ring at the shrine, and investing him with sword, helmet, shield, and spurs. Then* Antonio, *the* Duchess, *and their children, having presented themselves at the shrine, are, by a form of banishment in dumb-show expressed towards them by the* Cardinal *and the state of Ancona, banished: during all which ceremony, this ditty is sung, to very solemn music, by divers church-men; and then exeunt* [*all except the Two Pilgrims*].]

Arms and honours deck thy story,
To thy fame's eternal glory!
Adverse fortune ever fly thee;
No disastrous fate come nigh thee!
I alone will sing thy praises,
Whom to honour virtue raises,
And thy study, that divine is,
Bent to martial discipline is,
Lay aside all those robes lie by thee;
Crown thy arts with arms, they'll beautify thee.

O worthy of worthiest name, adorn'd in this manner,
Lead bravely thy forces on under war's warlike banner!

O, mayst thou prove fortunate in all martial courses!
Guide thou still by skill in arts and forces!
Victory attend thee nigh, whilst fame sings loud thy powers;
Triumphant conquest crown thy head, and blessings pour down showers!

1 Pil. Here's a strange turn of state! who would have thought
So great a lady would have match'd herself
Unto so mean a person? Yet the cardinal
Bears himself much too cruel.
2 Pil. They are banish'd.
1 Pil. But I would ask what power hath this state
Of Ancona to determine of a free prince?
2 Pil. They are a free state, sir, and her brother show'd
How that the Pope, fore-hearing of her looseness,
Hath seiz'd into th' protection of the church
The dukedom which she held as dowager.
1 Pil. But by what justice?
2 Pil. Sure, I think by none,
Only her brother's instigation.
1 Pil. What was it with such violence he took
Off from her finger?
2 Pil. 'Twas her wedding-ring;
Which he vow'd shortly he would sacrifice
To his revenge.
1 Pil. Alas, Antonio!
If that a man be thrust into a well,
No matter who sets hand to't, his own weight
Will bring him sooner to th' bottom. Come, let's hence.
Fortune makes this conclusion general,
All things do help th' unhappy man to fall.
(*Exeunt.*)

Scene V.

([*Enter*] Duchess, Antonio, *Children*, Cariola, *and Servants*.)

Duch. Banish'd Ancona!
Ant. Yes, you see what power
Lightens in great men's breath.
Duch. Is all our train
Shrunk to this poor remainder?
Ant. These poor men,
Which have got little in your service, vow
To take your fortune: but your wiser buntings,
Now they are fledg'd, are gone.
Duch. They have done wisely.
This puts me in mind of death: physicians thus,
With their hands full of money, use to give o'er
Their patients.
Ant. Right the fashion of the world:
From decay'd fortunes every flatterer shrinks;
Men cease to build where the foundation sinks.
Duch. I had a very strange dream to-night.
Ant. What was't?
Duch. Methought I wore my coronet of state,
And on a sudden all the diamonds
Were chang'd to pearls.
Ant. My interpretation
Is, you'll weep shortly; for to me the pearls
Do signify your tears.
Duch. The birds, that live i' th' field
On the wild benefit of nature, live
Happier than we: for they may choose their mates,
And carol their sweet pleasures to the spring.

[*Enter* Bosola *with a letter*.]

Bos. You are happily o'erta'en.
Duch. From my brother?
Bos. Yes, from the Lord Ferdinand your brother
All love and safety.
Duch. Thou dost blanch mischief,
Would'st make it white. See, see, like to calm weather
At sea before a tempest, false hearts speak fair
To those they intend most mischief.
[*Reads.*]
"Send Antonio to me; I want his head in a business."
A politic equivocation!
He doth not want your counsel, but your head;

That is, he cannot sleep till you be dead.
And here's another pitfall that's strew'd o'er
With roses; mark it, 'tis a cunning one: [*Reads.*]
"I stand engaged for your husband for several debts at Naples: let not that trouble him; I had rather have his heart than his money." —
And I believe so too.
Bos. What do you believe?
Duch. That he so much distrusts my husband's love,
He will by no means believe his heart is with him
Until he see it: the devil is not cunning enough
To circumvent us in riddles.
Bos. Will you reject that noble and free league
Of amity and love which I present you?
Duch. Their league is like that of some politic kings,
Only to make themselves of strength and power
To be our after-ruin: tell them so.
Bos. And what from you?
Ant. Thus tell him; I will not come.
Bos. And what of this?
Ant. My brothers have dispers'd
Bloodhounds abroad; which till I hear are muzzl'd,
No truce, though hatch'd with ne'er such politic skill,
Is safe, that hangs upon our enemies' will.
I'll not come at them.
Bos. This proclaims your breeding.
Every small thing draws a base mind to fear
As the adamant draws iron. Fare you well, sir;
You shall shortly hear from's. (*Exit.*)
Duch. I suspect some ambush;
Therefore by all my love I do conjure you
To take your eldest son, and fly towards Milan,
Let us not venture all this poor remainder
In one unlucky bottom.
Ant. You counsel safely.
Best of my life, farewell. Since we must part,
Heaven hath a hand in't; but no otherwise
Than as some curious artist takes in sunder
A clock or watch, when it is out of frame,
To bring't in better order.
Duch. I know not which is best,
To see you dead, or part with you. Farewell, boy:
Thou art happy that thou hast not understanding
To know thy misery; for all our wit
And reading brings us to a truer sense
Of sorrow. — In the eternal church, sir,
I do hope we shall not part thus.
Ant. O, be of comfort!
Make patience a noble fortitude,
And think not how unkindly we are us'd:
Man, like to cassia, is prov'd best, being bruis'd.
Duch. Must I, like to a slave-born Russian,
Account it praise to suffer tyranny?
And yet, O heaven, thy heavy hand is in't!
I have seen my little boy oft scourge his top,
And compar'd myself to't: naught made me e'er
Go right but heaven's scourge-stick.
Ant. Do not weep:
Heaven fashion'd us of nothing; and we strive
To bring ourselves to nothing. — Farewell, Cariola,
And thy sweet armful. — If I do never see thee more,
Be a good mother to your little ones,
And save them from the tiger: fare you well.
Duch. Let me look upon you once more, for that speech
Came from a dying father. Your kiss is colder
Than that I have seen an holy anchorite
Give to a dead man's skull.
Ant. My heart is turn'd to a heavy lump of lead,
With which I sound my danger: fare you well.
(*Exeunt* [Antonio *and his son*].)

Duch. My laurel is all withered.
Cari. Look. madam, what a troop of armed men
Make toward us!

(*Re-enter* Bosola [*visarded,*] *with a Guard.*)

Duch. O, they are very welcome:
When Fortune's wheel is over-charg'd with princes,
The weight makes it move swift: I would have my ruin
Be sudden. — I am your adventure, am I not?
Bos. You are: you must see your husband no more.
Duch. What devil art thou that counterfeit'st heaven's thunder?
Bos. Is that terrible? I would have you tell me whether
Is that note worse that frights the silly birds
Out of the corn, or that which doth allure them
To the nets? You have heark'ned to the last too much.
Duch. O misery! like to a rusty o'er-charg'd cannon,
Shall I never fly in pieces? Come, to what prison?
Bos. To none.
Duch. Whither, then?
Bos. To your palace.
Duch. I have heard
That Charon's boat serves to convey all o'er
The dismal lake, but brings none back again.
Bos. Your brothers mean you safety and pity.
Duch. Pity!
With such a pity men preserve alive
Pheasants and quails, when they are not fat enough
To be eaten.
Bos. These are your children?
Duch. Yes.
Bos. Can they prattle?
Duch. No:
But I intend, since they were born accurs'd,
Curses shall be their first language.
Bos. Fie, madam!
Forget this base, low fellow——
Duch. Were I a man,
I'd beat that counterfeit face into thy other.
Bos. One of no birth.
Duch. Say that he was born mean,
Man is most happy when's own actions
Be arguments and examples of his virtue.
Bos. A barren, beggarly virtue.
Duch. I prithee, who is greatest? Can you tell?
Sad tales befit my woe: I'll tell you one.
A salmon, as she swam unto the sea,
Met with a dog-fish, who encounters her
With this rough language: 'Why art thou so bold
To mix thyself with our high state of floods,
Being no eminent courtier, but one
That for the calmest and fresh time o' th' year
Dost live in shallow rivers, rank'st thyself
With silly smelts and shrimps? And darest thou
Pass by our dog-ship without reverence?'
'O,' quoth the salmon, 'sister, be at peace:
Thank Jupiter we both have pass'd the net!
Our value never can be truly known,
Till in the fisher's basket we be shown:
I' th' market then my price may be the higher,
Even when I am nearest to the cook and fire.'
So to great men the moral may be stretched;
Men oft are valu'd high, when they're most wretched. —
But come, whither you please. I am arm'd 'gainst misery;
Bent to all sways of the oppressor's will.
There's no deep valley but near some great hill. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Ferdinand *and* Bosola.)

Ferd. How doth our sister duchess bear herself
In her imprisonment?
Bos. Nobly: I'll describe her.

She's sad as one long us'd to't, and she seems
Rather to welcome the end of misery
Than shun it; a behaviour so noble
As gives a majesty to adversity:
You may discern the shape of loveliness
More perfect in her tears than in her smiles:
She will muse four hours together; and her silence,
Methinks, expresseth more than if she spake.

Ferd. Her melancholy seems to be fortified
With a strange disdain.

Bos. 'Tis so; and this restraint,
Like English mastives that grow fierce with tying,
Makes her too passionately apprehend
Those pleasures she is kept from.

Ferd. Curse upon her!
I will no longer study in the book
Of another's heart. Inform her what I told you. (*Exit.*)

[*Enter* Duchess *and Attendants.*]

Bos. All comfort to your grace!

Duch. I will have none.
Pray thee, why dost thou wrap thy poison'd pills
In gold and sugar?

Bos. Your elder brother, the Lord Ferdinand,
Is come to visit you, and sends you word,
'Cause once he rashly made a solemn vow
Never to see you more, he comes i' th' night;
And prays you gently neither torch nor taper
Shine in your chamber. He will kiss your hand,
And reconcile himself; but for his vow
He dares not see you.

Duch. At his pleasure. —
Take hence the lights. — He's come.
[*Exeunt Attendants with lights.*]

[*Enter* Ferdinand.]

Ferd. Where are you?

Duch. Here, sir.

Ferd. This darkness suits you well.

Duch. I would ask you pardon.

Ferd. You have it;
For I account it the honorabl'st revenge,
Where I may kill, to pardon. — Where are your cubs?

Duch. Whom?

Ferd. Call them your children;
For though our national law distinguish bastards
From true legitimate issue, compassionate nature
Makes them all equal.

Duch. Do you visit me for this?
You violate a sacrament o' th' church
Shall make you howl in hell for't.

Ferd. It had been well
Could you have liv'd thus always; for, indeed,
You were too much i' th' light: — but no more;
I come to seal my peace with you. Here's a hand (*Gives her a dead man's hand.*)
To which you have vow'd much love; the ring upon't
You gave.

Duch. I affectionately kiss it.

Ferd. Pray, do, and bury the print of it in your heart.
I will leave this ring with you for a love-token;
And the hand as sure as the ring; and do not doubt
But you shall have the heart too. When you need a friend,
Send it to him that ow'd it; you shall see
Whether he can aid you.

Duch. You are very cold:
I fear you are not well after your travel. —
Ha! lights! —— O, horrible!

Ferd. Let her have lights enough. (*Exit.*)

Duch. What witchcraft doth he practise, that he hath left
A dead man's hand here?
(*Here is discover'd, behind a traverse, the artificial figures of* Antonio *and his children, appearing as if they were dead.*)

Bos. Look you, here's the piece from which 'twas ta'en.
He doth present you this sad spectacle,
That, now you know directly they are dead,
Hereafter you may wisely cease to grieve

For that which cannot be recovered.
Duch. There is not between heaven and earth one wish
I stay for after this. It wastes me more
Than were't my picture, fashion'd out of wax,
Stuck with a magical needle, and then buried
In some foul dung hill; and yon's an excellent property
For a tyrant, which I would account mercy.
Bos. What's that?
Duch. If they would bind me to that lifeless trunk,
And let me freeze to death.
Bos. Come, you must live.
Duch. That's the greatest torture souls feel in hell,
In hell, that they must live, and cannot die.
Portia, I'll new kindle thy coals again,
And revive the rare and almost dead example
Of a loving wife.
Bos. O, fie! despair? Remember
You are a Christian.
Duch. The church enjoins fasting:
I'll starve myself to death.
Bos. Leave this vain sorrow.
Things being at the worst begin to mend: the bee
When he hath shot his sting into your hand,
May then play with your eye-lid.
Duch. Good comfortable fellow,
Persuade a wretch that's broke upon the wheel
To have all his bones new set; entreat him live
To be executed again. Who must despatch me?
I account this world a tedious theatre,
For I do play a part in't 'gainst my will.
Bos. Come, be of comfort; I will save your life.
Duch. Indeed, I have not leisure to tend so small a business.
Bos. Now, by my life, I pity you.
Duch. Thou art a fool, then,
To waste thy pity on a thing so wretched
As cannot pity itself. I am full of daggers.
Puff, let me blow these vipers from me.

[*Enter Servant.*]

What are you?
Serv. One that wishes you long life.
Duch. I would thou wert hang'd for the horrible curse
Thou hast given me: I shall shortly grow one
Of the miracles of pity. I'll go pray; — [*Exit Serv.*]
No, I'll go curse.
Bos. O, fie!
Duch. I could curse the stars —
Bos. O, fearful!
Duch. And those three smiling seasons of the year
Into a Russian winter; nay, the world
To its first chaos.
Bos. Look you, the stars shine still.
Duch. O, but you must
Remember, my curse hath a great way to go. —
Plagues, that make lanes through largest families,
Consume them! —
Bos. Fie, lady!
Duch. Let them, like tyrants,
Never be remembered but for the ill they have done;
Let all the zealous prayers of mortified
Churchmen forget them! —
Bos. O, uncharitable!
Duch. Let heaven a little while cease crowning martyrs,
To punish them! —
Go, howl them this, and say, I long to bleed:
It is some mercy when men kill with speed. (*Exit.*)

[*Re-enter* Ferdinand.]

Ferd. Excellent, as I would wish; she's plagu'd in art.
These presentations are but fram'd in wax
By the curious master in that quality,
Vincentio Lauriola, and she takes them
For true substantial bodies.
Bos. Why do you do this?
Ferd. To bring her to despair.
Bos. Faith, end here,
And go no farther in your cruelty:

Send her a penitential garment to put on
Next to her delicate skin, and furnish her
With beads and prayer-books.
Ferd. Damn her! that body of hers,
While that my blood ran pure in't, was more worth
Than that which thou wouldst comfort, call'd a soul.
I will send her masques of common courtesans,
Have her meat serv'd up by bawds and ruffians,
And, 'cause she'll needs be mad, I am resolv'd
To move forth the common hospital
All the mad-folk, and place them near her lodging;
There let them practise together, sing and dance,
And act their gambols to the full o' th' moon:
If she can sleep the better for it, let her.
Your work is almost ended.
Bos. Must I see her again?
Ferd. Yes.
Bos. Never.
Ferd. You must.
Bos. Never in mine own shape;
That's forfeited by my intelligence
And this last cruel lie: when you send me next,
The business shall be comfort.
Ferd. Very likely,
Thy pity is nothing of kin to thee. Antonio
Lurks about Milan: thou shalt shortly thither,
To feed a fire as great as my revenge,
Which nev'r will slack till it hath spent his fuel:
Intemperate agues make physicians cruel.
(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.]

(*Enter* Duchess *and* Cariola.)

Duch. What hideous noise was that?
Cari. 'Tis the wild consort
Of madmen, lady, which your tyrant brother
Hath plac'd about your lodging. This tyranny,
I think, was never practis'd till this hour.
Duch. Indeed, I thank him. Nothing but noise and folly
Can keep me in my right wits; whereas reason
And silence make me stark mad. Sit down;
Discourse to me some dismal tragedy.
Cari. O, 'twill increase your melancholy!
Duch. Thou art deceiv'd:
To hear of greater grief would lessen mine.
This is a prison?
Cari. Yes, but you shall live
To shake this durance off.
Duch. Thou art a fool:
The robin-red-breast and the nightingale
Never live long in cages.
Cari. Pray, dry your eyes.
What think you of, madam?
Duch. Of nothing;
When I muse thus, I sleep.
Cari. Like a madman, with your eyes open?
Duch. Dost thou think we shall know one another
In th' other world?
Cari. Yes, out of question.
Duch. O, that it were possible we might
But hold some two days' conference with the dead!
From them I should learn somewhat, I am sure,
I never shall know here. I'll tell thee a miracle:
I am not mad yet, to my cause of sorrow:
Th' heaven o'er my head seems made of molten brass,
The earth of flaming sulphur, yet I am not mad.
I am acquainted with sad misery
As the tann'd galley-slave is with his oar;
Necessity makes me suffer constantly,
And custom makes it easy. Who do I look like now?

Cari. Like to your picture in the gallery,
A deal of life in show, but none in practice;
Or rather like some reverend monument
Whose ruins are even pitied.
Duch. Very proper;
And Fortune seems only to have her eyesight
To behold my tragedy. — How now!
What noise is that?

[*Enter Servant.*]

Serv. I am come to tell you
Your brother hath intended you some sport.
A great physician, when the Pope was sick
Of a deep melancholy, presented him
With several sorts of madmen, which wild object
Being full of change and sport, forc'd him to laugh,
And so th' imposthume broke: the self-same cure
The duke intends on you.
Duch. Let them come in.
Serv. There's a mad lawyer; and a secular priest;
A doctor that hath forfeited his wits
By jealousy; an astrologian
That in his works said such a day o' th' month
Should be the day of doom, and, failing of't,
Ran mad; an English tailor craz'd i' th' brain
With the study of new fashions; a gentleman-usher
Quite beside himself with care to keep in mind
The number of his lady's salutations,
Or 'How do you,' she employ'd him in each morning;
A farmer, too, an excellent knave in grain,
Mad 'cause he was hind'red transportation:
And let one broker that's mad loose to these,
You'd think the devil were among them.
Duch. Sit, Cariola. — Let them loose when you please,
For I am chain'd to endure all your tyranny.

[*Enter Madman.*]

(*Here by a Madman this song is sung to a dismal kind of music.*)

O, let us howl some heavy note,
Some deadly dogged howl,
Sounding as from the threat'ning throat
Of beasts and fatal fowl!
As ravens, screech-owls, bulls, and bears,
We'll bell, and bawl our parts,
Till irksome noise have cloy'd your ears
And corrosiv'd your hearts.
At last, when as our choir wants breath,
Our bodies being blest,
We'll sing, like swans, to welcome death,
And die in love and rest.

1 Madman. Doom's-day not come yet! I'll draw it nearer by a perspective, or make a glass that shall set all the world on fire upon an instant. I cannot sleep; my pillow is stuft with a litter of porcupines.

2 Madman. Hell is a mere glass-house, where the devils are continually blowing up women's souls on hollow irons, and the fire never goes out.

3 Madman. I will lie with every woman in my parish the tenth night. I will tithe them over like hay-cocks.

4 Madman. Shall my 'pothecary out-go me, because I am a cuckold? I have found out his roguery: he makes alum of his wife's urine, and sells it to Puritans that have sore throats with over-straining.

1 Madman. I have skill in heraldry.

2 Madman. Hast?

1 Madman. You do give for your crest a woodcock's head with the brains pickt out on't; you are a very ancient gentleman.

3 Madman. Greek is turn'd Turk: we are only to be sav'd by the Helvetian translation.

1 Madman. Come on, sir, I will lay the law to you.

2 Madman. O, rather lay a corrosive: the law will eat to the bone.

3 Madman. He that drinks but to satisfy nature is damn'd.

4 Madman. If I had my glass here, I would show a sight should make all the women here call me mad doctor.

1 Madman. What's he? A rope-maker?

2 Madman. No, no, no; a snuffling knave that while he shows the tombs, will have his hand in a wench's placket.

3 Madman. Woe to the caroche that brought home my wife from the masque at three o'clock in the morning! It had a large feather-bed in it.

4 Madman. I have pared the devil's nails forty times, roasted them in raven's eggs, and cur'd agues with them.

3 Madman. Get me three hundred milch-bats, to make possets to procure sleep.

4 Madman. All the college may throw their caps at me: I have made a soap-boiler costive; it was my masterpiece.

(*Here the dance, consisting of eight Madmen, with music answerable thereunto; after which,* Bosola, *like an old man, enters.*)

Duch. Is he mad too?
Serv. Pray, question him. I'll leave you.
[*Exeunt Servant and Madmen.*]
Bos. I am come to make thy tomb.
Duch. Ha! my tomb!
Thou speak'st as if I lay upon my death-bed,
Gasping for breath. Dost thou perceive me sick?

Bos. Yes, and the more dangerously, since thy sickness is insensible.

Duch. Thou art not mad, sure: dost know me?
Bos. Yes.
Duch. Who am I?

Bos. Thou art a box of worm-seed, at best but a salvatory of green mummy. What's this flesh? A little crudded milk, fantastical puff-paste. Our bodies are weaker than those paper-prisons boys use to keep flies in; more contemptible, since ours is to preserve earth-worms. Didst thou ever see a lark in a cage? Such is the soul in the body: this world is like her little turf of grass, and the heaven o'er our heads, like her looking-glass, only gives us a miserable knowledge of the small compass of our prison.

Duch. Am I not thy duchess?

Bos. Thou art some great woman, sure, for riot begins to sit on thy forehead (clad in gray hairs) twenty years sooner than on a merry milk-maid's. Thou sleep'st worse than if a mouse should be forc'd to take up her lodging in a cat's ear: a little infant that breeds its teeth, should it lie with thee, would cry out, as if thou wert the more unquiet bedfellow.

Duch. I am Duchess of Malfi still.
Bos. That makes thy sleep so broken:
Glories, like glow-worms, afar off shine bright,
But, look'd to near, have neither heat nor light.
Duch. Thou art very plain.

Bos. My trade is to flatter the dead, not the living; I am a tomb-maker.

Duch. And thou com'st to make my tomb?

Bos. Yes.

Duch. Let me be a little merry: — of what stuff wilt thou make it?

Bos. Nay, resolve me first, of what fashion?

Duch. Why, do we grow fantastical on our deathbed?
Do we affect fashion in the grave?

Bos. Most ambitiously. Princes' images on their tombs do not lie, as they were wont, seeming to pray up to heaven; but with their hands under their cheeks, as if they died of the tooth-ache. They are not carved with their eyes fix'd upon the stars, but as their minds were wholly bent upon the world, the selfsame way they seem to turn their faces.

Duch. Let me know fully therefore the effect
Of this thy dismal preparation,
This talk fit for a charnel.
Bos. Now I shall: —

([*Enter Executioners, with*] *a coffin, cords, and a bell.*)

Here is a present from your princely brothers;
And may it arrive welcome, for it brings
Last benefit, last sorrow.
Duch. Let me see it:
I have so much obedience in my blood,

I wish it in their veins to do them good.
Bos. This is your last presence-chamber.
Cari. O my sweet lady!
Duch. Peace; it affrights not me.
Bos. I am the common bellman
That usually is sent to condemn'd persons
The night before they suffer.
Duch. Even now thou said'st
Thou wast a tomb-maker.
Bos. 'Twas to bring you
By degrees to mortification. Listen.

Hark, now everything is still,
The screech-owl and the whistler shrill
Call upon our dame aloud,
And bid her quickly don her shroud!
Much you had of land and rent;
Your length in clay's now competent:
A long war disturb'd your mind;
Here your perfect peace is sign'd.
Of what is't fools make such vain keeping?
Sin their conception, their birth weeping,
Their life a general mist of error,
Their death a hideous storm of terror.
Strew your hair with powders sweet,
Don clean linen, bathe your feet,
And (the foul fiend more to check)
A crucifix let bless your neck.
'Tis now full tide 'tween night and day;
End your groan, and come away.

Cari. Hence, villains, tyrants, murderers! Alas!
What will you do with my lady? — Call for help!
Duch. To whom? To our next neighbours? They are mad-folks.
Bos. Remove that noise.
Duch. Farewell, Cariola.
In my last will I have not much to give:
A many hungry guests have fed upon me;
Thine will be a poor reversion.
Cari. I will die with her.
Duch. I pray thee, look thou giv'st my little boy
Some syrup for his cold, and let the girl
Say her prayers ere she sleep.
[Cariola *is forced out by the Executioners.*]
Now what you please:
What death?
Bos. Strangling; here are your executioners.
Duch. I forgive them:
The apoplexy, catarrh, or cough o' th' lungs,
Would do as much as they do.
Bos. Doth not death fright you?
Duch. Who would be afraid on't,
Knowing to meet such excellent company
In th' other world?
Bos. Yet, methinks,
The manner of your death should much afflict you:
This cord should terrify you.
Duch. Not a whit:
What would it pleasure me to have my throat cut
With diamonds? or to be smothered
With cassia? or to be shot to death with pearls?
I know death hath ten thousand several doors
For men to take their exits; and 'tis found
They go on such strange geometrical hinges,
You may open them both ways: any way, for heaven-sake,
So I were out of your whispering. Tell my brothers
That I perceive death, now I am well awake,
Best gift is they can give or I can take.
I would fain put off my last woman's-fault,
I'd not be tedious to you.
1 Execut. We are ready.
Duch. Dispose my breath how please you; but my body
Bestow upon my women, will you?
1 Execut. Yes.
Duch. Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength
Must pull down heaven upon me: —
Yet stay; heaven-gates are not so highly arch'd
As princes' palaces; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees [*kneels*]. — Come, violent death,
Serve for mandragora to make me sleep! —
Go tell my brothers, when I am laid out,
They then may feed in quiet.
(*They strangle her.*)
Bos. Where's the waiting-woman?
Fetch her: some other strangle the children.

[*Enter* Cariola.]

Look you, there sleeps your mistress.
Cari. O, you are damn'd
Perpetually for this! My turn is next;
Is't not so ordered?
Bos. Yes, and I am glad
You are so well prepar'd for't.
Cari. You are deceiv'd, sir,
I am not prepar'd for't, I will not die;
I will first come to my answer, and know
How I have offended.
Bos. Come, despatch her. —
You kept her counsel; now you shall keep ours.
Cari. I will not die, I must not; I am contracted
To a young gentleman.
1 Execut. Here's your wedding-ring.
Cari. Let me but speak with the duke. I'll discover
Treason to his person.
Bos. Delays: — throttle her.
1 Execut. She bites and scratches.
Cari. If you kill me now,
I am damn'd; I have not been at confession
This two years.
Bos. [*to Executioners*]. When!
Cari. I am quick with child.
Bos. Why, then,
Your credit's saved.
[*Executioners strangle* Cariola.]
Bear her into th' next room;
Let these lie still.
[*Exeunt Executioners with body of* Cariola.]

[*Enter* Ferdinand.]

Ferd. Is she dead?
Bos. She is what
You'd have her. But here begin your pity:
(*Shows the Children strangled.*)
Alas, how have these offended?
Ferd. The death
Of young wolves is never to be pitied.
Bos. Fix your eye here.
Ferd. Constantly.
Bos. Do you not weep?
Other sins only speak; murder shrieks out.
The element of water moistens the earth,
But blood flies upwards and bedews the heavens.
Ferd. Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle: she died young.
Bos. I think not so; her infelicity
Seem'd to have years too many.
Ferd. She and I were twins;
And should I die this instant, I had liv'd
Her time to a minute.
Bos. It seems she was born first:
You have bloodily approv'd the ancient truth,
That kindred commonly do worse agree
Than remote strangers.
Ferd. Let me see her face
Again. Why didst thou not pity her? What
An excellent honest man mightst thou have been,
If thou hadst borne her to some sanctuary!
Or, bold in a good cause, — oppos'd thyself,
With thy advanced sword above thy head,
Between her innocence and my revenge!
I bade thee, when I was distracted of my wits,
Go kill my dearest friend, and thou hast done't.
For let me but examine well the cause:
What was the meanness of her match to me?
Only I must confess I had a hope,
Had she continu'd widow, to have gain'd
An infinite mass of treasure by her death:
And that was the main cause, — her marriage,
That drew a stream of gall quite through my heart.
For thee, as we observe in tragedies
That a good actor many times is curs'd
For playing a villain's part, I hate thee for't.
And, for my sake, say, thou hast done much ill well.
Bos. Let me quicken your memory, for I perceive
You are falling into ingratitude: I challenge
The reward due to my service.
Ferd. I'll tell thee
What I'll give thee.
Bos. Do.
Ferd. I'll give thee a pardon

For this murder.
Bos. Ha!
Ferd. Yes, and 'tis
The largest bounty I can study to do thee.
By what authority didst thou execute
This bloody sentence?
Bos. By yours.
Ferd. Mine! Was I her judge?
Did any ceremonial form of law
Doom her to not-being? Did a complete jury
Deliver her conviction up i' th' court?
Where shalt thou find this judgment register'd,
Unless in hell? See, like a bloody fool,
Thou'st forfeited thy life, and thou shalt die for't.
Bos. The office of justice is perverted quite
When one thief hangs another. Who shall dare
To reveal this?
Ferd. O, I'll tell thee;
The wolf shall find her grave, and scrape it up,
Not to devour the corpse, but to discover
The horrid murder.
Bos. You, not I, shall quake for't.
Ferd. Leave me.
Bos. I will first receive my pension.
Ferd. You are a villain.
Bos. When your ingratitude
Is judge, I am so.
Ferd. O horror,
That not the fear of him which binds the devils
Can prescribe man obedience! —
Never look upon me more.
Bos. Why, fare thee well.
Your brother and yourself are worthy men!
You have a pair of hearts are hollow graves,
Rotten, and rotting others; and your vengeance,
Like two chain'd-bullets, still goes arm in arm:
You may be brothers; for treason, like the plague,
Doth take much in a blood. I stand like one
That long hath ta'en a sweet and golden dream:
I am angry with myself now, that I wake.
Ferd. Get thee into some unknown part o' the world,
That I may never see thee.
Bos. Let me know
Wherefore I should be thus neglected. Sir,
I serv'd your tyranny, and rather strove
To satisfy yourself than all the world:
And though I loath'd the evil, yet I lov'd
You that did counsel it; and rather sought
To appear a true servant than an honest man.
Ferd. I'll go hunt the badger by owl-light:
'Tis a deed of darkness. (*Exit.*)
Bos. He's much distracted. Off, my painted honour!
While with vain hopes our faculties we tire,
We seem to sweat in ice and freeze in fire.
What would I do, were this to do again?
I would not change my peace of conscience
For all the wealth of Europe. — She stirs; here's life: —
Return, fair soul, from darkness, and lead mine
Out of this sensible hell! — she's warm, she breathes: —
Upon thy pale lips I will melt my heart,
To store them with fresh colour. — Who's there?
Some cordial drink! — Alas! I dare not call:
So pity would destroy pity. — Her eye opes,
And heaven in it seems to ope, that late was shut,
To take me up to mercy.
Duch. Antonio!
Bos. Yes, madam, he is living;
The dead bodies you saw were but feign'd statues.
He's reconcil'd to your brothers; the Pope hath wrought
The atonement.
Duch. Mercy! (*Dies.*)
Bos. O, she's gone again! there the cords of life broke.
O sacred innocence, that sweetly sleeps
On turtles' feathers, whilst a guilty conscience
Is a black register wherein is writ

All our good deeds and bad, a perspective
That shows us hell! That we cannot be suffer'd
To do good when we have a mind to it!
This is manly sorrow;
These tears, I am very certain, never grew
In my mother's milk. My estate is sunk
Below the degree of fear: where were
These penitent fountains while she was living?
O, they were frozen up! Here is a sight
As direful to my soul as is the sword
Unto a wretch hath slain his father.
Come, I'll bear thee hence,
And execute thy last will; that's deliver
Thy body to the reverend dispose
Of some good women: that the cruel tyrant
Shall not deny me. Then I'll post to Milan,
Where somewhat I will speedily enact
Worth my dejection. (*Exit* [*with the body*].)

ACT V.

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Antonio *and* Delio.)

Ant. What think you of my hope of reconcilement
To the Arragonian brethren?
Delio. I misdoubt it;
For though they have sent their letters of safe-conduct
For your repair to Milan, they appear
But nets to entrap you. The Marquis of Pescara,
Under whom you hold certain land in cheat,
Much 'gainst his noble nature hath been mov'd
To seize those lands; and some of his dependants
Are at this instant making it their suit
To be invested in your revenues.
I cannot think they mean well to your life
That do deprive you of your means of life,
Your living.
Ant. You are still an heretic
To any safety I can shape myself.
Delio. Here comes the marquis: I will make myself
Petitioner for some part of your land,
To know whither it is flying.
Ant. I pray, do. [*Withdraws.*]

[*Enter* Pescara.]

Delio. Sir, I have a suit to you.
Pes. To me?
Delio. An easy one:
There is the Citadel of Saint Bennet,
With some demesnes, of late in the possession
Of Antonio Bologna, — please you bestow them on me.
Pes. You are my friend; but this is such a suit,
Nor fit for me to give, nor you to take.
Delio. No, sir?
Pes. I will give you ample reason for't
Soon in private: — here's the cardinal's mistress.

[*Enter* Julia.]

Julia. My lord, I am grown your poor petitioner,
And should be an ill beggar, had I not
A great man's letter here, the cardinal's,
To court you in my favour. [*Gives a letter.*]
Pes. He entreats for you
The Citadel of Saint Bennet, that belong'd
To the banish'd Bologna.
Julia. Yes.
Pes. I could not have thought of a friend I could rather
Pleasure with it: 'tis yours.
Julia. Sir, I thank you;
And he shall know how doubly I am engag'd
Both in your gift, and speediness of giving,
Which makes your grant the greater. (*Exit.*)
Ant. How they fortify
Themselves with my ruin!
Delio. Sir, I am
Little bound to you.
Pes. Why?
Delio. Because you deni'd this suit to me, and gave't
To such a creature.
Pes. Do you know what it was?
It was Antonio's land; not forfeited

By course of law, but ravish'd from his throat
By the cardinal's entreaty. It were not fit
I should bestow so main a piece of wrong
Upon my friend; 'tis a gratification
Only due to a strumpet, for it is injustice.
Shall I sprinkle the pure blood of innocents
To make those followers I call my friends
Look ruddier upon me? I am glad
This land, ta'en from the owner by such wrong,
Returns again unto so foul an use
As salary for his lust. Learn, good Delio,
To ask noble things of me, and you shall find
I'll be a noble giver.
DELIO. You instruct me well.
ANT. [*aside*]. Why, here's a man now would fright impudence
From sauciest beggars.
PES. Prince Ferdinand's come to Milan,
Sick, as they give out, of an apoplexy;
But some say 'tis a frenzy: I am going
To visit him. (*Exit.*)
ANT. 'Tis a noble old fellow.
DELIO. What course do you mean to take, Antonio?
ANT. This night I mean to venture all my fortune,
Which is no more than a poor ling'ring life,
To the cardinal's worst of malice. I have got
Private access to his chamber; and intend
To visit him about the mid of night,
As once his brother did our noble duchess.
It may be that the sudden apprehension
Of danger, — for I'll go in mine own shape, —
When he shall see it fraight with love and duty,
May draw the poison out of him, and work
A friendly reconcilement. If it fail,
Yet it shall rid me of this infamous calling;
For better fall once than be ever falling.
DELIO. I'll second you in all danger; and, howe'er,
My life keeps rank with yours.
ANT. You are still my lov'd and best friend. (*Exeunt.*)

[SCENE II.]

([*Enter*] PESCARA *and* DOCTOR.)

PES. Now, doctor, may I visit your patient?
DOC. If't please your lordship; but he's instantly
To take the air here in the gallery
By my direction.
PES. Pray thee, what's his disease?
DOC. A very pestilent disease, my lord,
They call lycanthropia.
PES. What's that?
I need a dictionary to't.
DOC. I'll tell you.
In those that are possess'd with't there o'erflows
Such melancholy humour they imagine
Themselves to be transformed into wolves;
Steal forth to church-yards in the dead of night,
And dig dead bodies up: as two nights since
One met the duke 'bout midnight in a lane
Behind Saint Mark's church, with the leg of a man
Upon his shoulder; and he howl'd fearfully;
Said he was a wolf, only the difference
Was, a wolf's skin was hairy on the outside,
His on the inside; bade them take their swords,
Rip up his flesh, and try. Straight I was sent for,
And, having minister'd to him, found his grace
Very well recovered.
PES. I am glad on't.
DOC. Yet not without some fear
Of a relapse. If he grow to his fit again,
I'll go a nearer way to work with him
Than ever Paracelsus dream'd of; if
They'll give me leave, I'll buffet his madness out of him.
Stand aside; he comes.

[*Enter* FERDINAND, CARDINAL, MALATESTI, *and* BOSOLA.]

FERD. Leave me.
MAL. Why doth your lordship love this solitariness?

Ferd. Eagles commonly fly alone: they are crows, daws, and starlings that flock together. Look, what's that follows me?

Mal. Nothing, my lord.

Ferd. Yes.

Mal. 'Tis your shadow.

Ferd. Stay it; let it not haunt me.

Mal. Impossible, if you move, and the sun shine.

Ferd. I will throttle it.

[*Throws himself down on his shadow.*]

Mal. O, my lord, you are angry with nothing.

Ferd. You are a fool: how is't possible I should catch my shadow, unless I fall upon 't? When I go to hell, I mean to carry a bribe; for, look you, good gifts evermore make way for the worst persons.

Pes. Rise, good my lord.

Ferd. I am studying the art of patience.

Pes. 'Tis a noble virtue.

Ferd. To drive six snails before me from this town to Moscow; neither use goad nor whip to them, but let them take their own time; — the patient'st man i' th' world match me for an experiment: — an I'll crawl after like a sheep-biter.

Card. Force him up. [*They raise him.*]

Ferd. Use me well, you were best. What I have done, I have done: I'll confess nothing.

Doc. Now let me come to him. — Are you mad, my lord?
Are you out of your princely wits?

Ferd. What's he?

Pes. Your doctor.

Ferd. Let me have his beard saw'd off, and his eye-brows fil'd more civil.

Doc. I must do mad tricks with him, for that's the only way on't. — I have brought your grace a salamander's skin to keep you from sunburning.

Ferd. I have cruel sore eyes.

Doc. The white of a cockatrix's egg is present remedy.

Ferd. Let it be a new-laid one, you were best.
Hide me from him: physicians are like kings, —
They brook no contradiction.

Doc. Now he begins to fear me: now let me alone with him.

Card. How now! put off your gown!

Doc. Let me have some forty urinals filled with rose-water: he and I'll go pelt one another with them. — Now he begins to fear me. — Can you fetch a frisk, sir? — Let him go, let him go, upon my peril: I find by his eye he stands in awe of me; I'll make him as tame as a dormouse.

Ferd. Can you fetch your frisks, sir! — I will stamp him into a cullis, flay off his skin to cover one of the anatomies this rogue hath set i' th' cold yonder in Barber-Chirurgeon's-hall. — Hence, hence! you are all of you like beasts for sacrifice. [*Throws the* Doctor *down and beats him.*] There's nothing left of you but tongue and belly, flattery and lechery.

[*Exit.*]

Pes. Doctor, he did not fear you thoroughly.

Doc. True; I was somewhat too forward.

Bos. Mercy upon me, what a fatal judgment
Hath fall'n upon this Ferdinand!

Pes. Knows your grace
What accident hath brought unto the prince
This strange distraction?

Card. [*aside*]. I must feign somewhat. — Thus they say it grew.
You have heard it rumour'd, for these many years
None of our family dies but there is seen
The shape of an old woman, which is given
By tradition to us to have been murder'd
By her nephews for her riches. Such a figure
One night, as the prince sat up late at's book,
Appear'd to him; when crying out for help,
The gentleman of's chamber found his grace
All on a cold sweat, alter'd much in face
And language: since which apparition,
He hath grown worse and worse, and I much fear
He cannot live.

Bos. Sir, I would speak with you.

Pes. We'll leave your grace,

Wishing to the sick prince, our noble lord,
All health of mind and body.
Card. You are most welcome.
[*Exeunt* Pescara, Malatesti, *and* Doctor.]
Are you come? so. — [*Aside.*] This fellow must not know
By any means I had intelligence
In our duchess' death; for, though I counsell'd it,
The full of all th' engagement seem'd to grow
From Ferdinand. — Now, sir, how fares our sister?
I do not think but sorrow makes her look
Like to an oft-dy'd garment: she shall now
Take comfort from me. Why do you look so wildly?
O, the fortune of your master here, the prince,
Dejects you; but be you of happy comfort:
If you'll do one thing for me I'll entreat,
Though he had a cold tomb-stone o'er his bones,
I'd make you what you would be.
Bos. Any thing;
Give it me in a breath, and let me fly to't.
They that think long small expedition win,
For musing much o' th' end cannot begin.

[*Enter* Julia.]

Julia. Sir, will you come in to supper?
Card. I am busy; leave me.
Julia [*aside*]. What an excellent shape hath that fellow! (*Exit.*)
Card. 'Tis thus. Antonio lurks here in Milan:
Inquire him out, and kill him. While he lives,
Our sister cannot marry; and I have thought
Of an excellent match for her. Do this, and style me
Thy advancement.
Bos. But by what means shall I find him out?
Card. There is a gentleman call'd Delio
Here in the camp, that hath been long approv'd
His loyal friend. Set eye upon that fellow;
Follow him to mass; may be Antonio,
Although he do account religion
But a school-name, for fashion of the world
May accompany him; or else go inquire out
Delio's confessor, and see if you can bribe
Him to reveal it. There are a thousand ways
A man might find to trace him; as to know
What fellows haunt the Jews for taking up
Great sums of money, for sure he's in want;
Or else to go to th' picture-makers, and learn
Who bought her picture lately: some of these
Happily may take.
Bos. Well, I'll not freeze i' th' business:
I would see that wretched thing, Antonio,
Above all sights i' th' world.
Card. Do, and be happy. (*Exit.*)
Bos. This fellow doth breed basilisks in 's eyes,
He's nothing else but murder; yet he seems
Not to have notice of the duchess' death.
'Tis his cunning: I must follow his example;
There cannot be a surer way to trace
Than that of an old fox.

[*Re-enter* Julia, *with a pistol.*]

Julia. So, sir, you are well met.
Bos. How now!
Julia. Nay, the doors are fast enough:
Now, sir, I will make you confess your treachery.
Bos. Treachery!
Julia. Yes, confess to me
Which of my women 'twas you hir'd to put
Love-powder into my drink?
Bos. Love powder!
Julia. Yes, when I was at Malfi.
Why should I fall in love with such a face else?
I have already suffer'd for thee so much pain,
The only remedy to do me good
Is to kill my longing.
Bos. Sure, your pistol holds
Nothing but perfumes or kissing-comfits.
Excellent lady!
You have a pretty way on't to discover

Your longing. Come, come, I'll disarm you,
And arm you thus: yet this is wondrous strange.
Julia. Compare thy form and my eyes together,
You'll find my love no such great miracle.
Now you'll say
I am wanton: this nice modesty in ladies
Is but a troublesome familiar
That haunts them.
Bos. Know you me, I am a blunt soldier.
Julia. The better:
Sure, there wants fire where there are no lively sparks
Of roughness.
Bos. And I want compliment.
Julia. Why, ignorance
In courtship cannot make you do amiss,
If you have a heart to do well.
Bos. You are very fair.
Julia. Nay, if you lay beauty to my charge,
I must plead unguilty.
Bos. Your bright eyes
Carry a quiver of darts in them, sharper
Than sun-beams.
Julia. You will mar me with commendation,
Put yourself to the charge of courting me,
Whereas now I woo you.
Bos. [*aside*]. I have it, I will work upon this creature, —
Let us grow most amorously familiar:
If the great cardinal now should see me thus,
Would he not count me a villain?
Julia. No; he might count me a wanton,
Not lay a scruple of offence on you;
For if I see and steal a diamond,
The fault is not i' th' stone, but in me the thief
That purloins it. I am sudden with you.
We that are great women of pleasure use to cut off
These uncertain wishes and unquiet longings,
And in an instant join the sweet delight
And the pretty excuse together. Had you been i' th' street,
Under my chamber-window, even there
I should have courted you.
Bos. O, you are an excellent lady!
Julia. Bid me do somewhat for you presently
To express I love you.
Bos. I will; and if you love me,
Fail not to effect it.
The cardinal is grown wondrous melancholy;
Demand the cause, let him not put you off
With feign'd excuse; discover the main ground on't.
Julia. Why would you know this?
Bos. I have depended on him,
And I hear that he is fall'n in some disgrace
With the emperor: if he be, like the mice
That forsake falling houses, I would shift
To other dependance.
Julia. You shall not need
Follow the wars: I'll be your maintenance.
Bos. And I your loyal servant: but I cannot
Leave my calling.
Julia. Not leave an ungrateful
General for the love of a sweet lady!
You are like some cannot sleep in feather-beds,
But must have blocks for their pillows.
Bos. Will you do this?
Julia. Cunningly.
Bos. To-morrow I'll expect th' intelligence.
Julia. To-morrow! Get you into my cabinet;
You shall have it with you. Do not delay me,
No more than I do you: I am like one
That is condemn'd; I have my pardon promis'd,
But I would see it seal'd. Go, get you in:
You shall see me wind my tongue about his heart
Like a skein of silk. [*Exit* Bosola.]

[*Re-enter* Cardinal.]

Card. Where are you?

[*Enter Servants.*]

Servants. Here.
Card. Let none, upon your lives, have conference

With the Prince Ferdinand, unless I know it. —
[*Aside.*] In this distraction he may reveal
The murder. [*Exeunt Servants.*]
Yond's my lingering consumption:
I am weary of her, and by any means
Would be quit of.

Julia. How now, my lord! what ails you?

Card. Nothing.

Julia. O, you are much alter'd:
Come, I must be your secretary, and remove
This lead from off your bosom: what's the matter?

Card. I may not tell you.

Julia. Are you so far in love with sorrow
You cannot part with part of it? Or think you
I cannot love your grace when you are sad
As well as merry? Or do you suspect
I, that have been a secret to your heart
These many winters, cannot be the same
Unto your tongue?

Card. Satisfy thy longing, —
The only way to make thee keep my counsel
Is, not to tell thee.

Julia. Tell your echo this,
Or flatterers, that like echoes still report
What they hear, though most imperfect, and not me;
For if that you be true unto yourself,
I'll know.

Card. Will you rack me?

Julia. No, judgment shall
Draw it from you: it is an equal fault,
To tell one's secrets unto all or none.

Card. The first argues folly.

Julia. But the last tyranny.

Card. Very well: why, imagine I have committed
Some secret deed which I desire the world
May never hear of.

Julia. Therefore may not I know it?
You have conceal'd for me as great a sin
As adultery. Sir, never was occasion
For perfect trial of my constancy
Till now; sir, I beseech you ——

Card. You'll repent it.

Julia. Never.

Card. It hurries thee to ruin: I'll not tell thee.
Be well advis'd, and think what danger 'tis
To receive a prince's secrets. They that do,
Had need have their breasts hoop'd with adamant
To contain them. I pray thee, yet be satisfi'd;
Examine thine own frailty; 'tis more easy
To tie knots than unloose them. 'Tis a secret
That, like a ling'ring poison, may chance lie
Spread in thy veins, and kill thee seven year hence.

Julia. Now you dally with me.

Card. No more; thou shalt know it.
By my appointment, the great Duchess of Malfi
And two of her young children, four nights since,
Were strangled.

Julia. O heaven! sir, what have you done!

Card. How now? How settles this? Think you your bosom
Will be a grave dark and obscure enough
For such a secret?

Julia. You have undone yourself, sir.

Card. Why?

Julia. It lies not in me to conceal it.

Card. No?
Come, I will swear you to't upon this book.

Julia. Most religiously.

Card. Kiss it. [*She kisses the book.*]
Now you shall never utter it; thy curiosity
Hath undone thee; thou'rt poison'd with that book.
Because I knew thou couldst not keep my counsel,
I have bound thee to't by death.

[*Re-enter* Bosola.]

Bos. For pity sake, hold!

Card. Ha, Bosola!

Julia. I forgive you
This equal piece of justice you have done;
For I betray'd your counsel to that fellow.
He over-heard it; that was the cause I said
It lay not in me to conceal it.

Bos. O foolish woman,
Couldst not thou have poison'd him?
Julia. 'Tis weakness
Too much to think what should have been done. I go,
I know not whither. [*Dies.*]
Card. Wherefore com'st thou hither?
Bos. That I might find a great man like yourself,
Not out of his wits, as the Lord Ferdinand,
To remember my service.
Card. I'll have thee hew'd in pieces.
Bos. Make not yourself such a promise of that life
Which is not yours to dispose of.
Card. Who plac'd thee here?
Bos. Her lust, as she intended.
Card. Very well:
Now you know me for your fellow-murderer.
Bos. And wherefore should you lay fair marble colours
Upon your rotten purposes to me?
Unless you imitate some that do plot great treasons,
And when they have done, go hide themselves i' th' graves
Of those were actors in't?
Card. No more; there is
A fortune attends thee.
Bos. Shall I go sue to Fortune any longer?
'Tis the fool's pilgrimage.
Card. I have honours in store for thee.
Bos. There are a many ways that conduct to seeming
Honour, and some of them very dirty ones.
Card. Throw to the devil
Thy melancholy. The fire burns well;
What need we keep a stirring of't, and make
A greater smother? Thou wilt kill Antonio?
Bos. Yes.
Card. Take up that body.
Bos. I think I shall
Shortly grow the common bier for churchyards.
Card. I will allow thee some dozen of attendants
To aid thee in the murder.

Bos. O, by no means. Physicians that apply horse-leeches to any rank swelling use to cut off their tails, that the blood may run through them the faster: let me have no train when I go to shed blood, lest it make me have a greater when I ride to the gallows.

Card. Come to me after midnight, to help to remove
That body to her own lodging. I'll give out
She died o' th' plague; 'twill breed the less inquiry
After her death.
Bos. Where's Castruccio her husband?
Card. He's rode to Naples, to take possession
Of Antonio's citadel.
Bos. Believe me, you have done a very happy turn.
Card. Fail not to come. There is the master-key
Of our lodgings; and by that you may conceive
What trust I plant in you.
Bos. You shall find me ready.
(*Exit* Cardinal.)
O poor Antonio, though nothing be so needful
To thy estate as pity, yet I find
Nothing so dangerous! I must look to my footing:
In such slippery ice-pavements men had need
To be frost-nail'd well, they may break their necks else;
The precedent's here afore me. How this man
Bears up in blood! seems fearless! Why, 'tis well:
Security some men call the suburbs of hell,
Only a dead wall between. Well, good Antonio,
I'll seek thee out; and all my care shall be
To put thee into safety from the reach
Of these most cruel biters that have got
Some of thy blood already. It may be,
I'll join with thee in a most just revenge.
The weakest arm is strong enough that strikes
With the sword of justice. Still methinks the duchess

Haunts me: there, there! — 'Tis nothing but my melancholy.
O Penitence, let me truly taste thy cup,
That throws men down only to raise them up! (*Exit.*)

Scene III.

([*Enter*] Antonio *and* Delio. [Echo *from the* Duchess's *Grave*].)

Delio. Yond's the cardinal's window. This fortification
Grew from the ruins of an ancient abbey;
And to yond side o' th' river lies a wall,
Piece of a cloister, which in my opinion
Gives the best echo that you ever heard,
So hollow and so dismal, and withal
So plain in the distinction of our words,
That many have suppos'd it is a spirit
That answers.
Ant. I do love these ancient ruins.
We never tread upon them but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history;
And, questionless, here in this open court,
Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of stormy weather, some men lie interr'd
Lov'd the church so well, and gave so largely to't,
They thought it should have canopied their bones
Till dooms-day. But all things have their end;
Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men,
Must have like death that we have.
Echo. *Like death that we have.*
Delio. Now the echo hath caught you.
Ant. It groan'd methought, and gave
A very deadly accent.
Echo. *Deadly accent.*
Delio. I told you 'twas a pretty one. You may make it
A huntsman, or a falconer, a musician,
Or a thing of sorrow.
Echo. *A thing of sorrow.*
Ant. Ay, sure, that suits it best.
Echo. *That suits it best.*
Ant. 'Tis very like my wife's voice.
Echo. *Ay, wife's voice.*
Delio. Come, let us walk further from't.
I would not have you go to the cardinal's to-night:
Do not.
Echo. *Do not.*
Delio. Wisdom doth not more moderate wasting sorrow
Than time. Take time for't; be mindful of thy safety.
Echo. *Be mindful of thy safety.*
Ant. Necessity compels me.
Make scrutiny throughout the passages
Of your own life, you'll find it impossible
To fly your fate.
Echo. *O, fly your fate!*
Delio. Hark! the dead stones seem to have pity on you,
And give you good counsel.
Ant. Echo, I will not talk with thee,
For thou art a dead thing.
Echo. *Thou art a dead thing.*
Ant. My duchess is asleep now,
And her little ones, I hope sweetly. O heaven,
Shall I never see her more?
Echo. *Never see her more.*
Ant. I mark'd not one repetition of the echo
But that; and on the sudden a clear light
Presented me a face folded in sorrow.
Delio. Your fancy merely.
Ant. Come, I'll be out of this ague.
For to live thus is not indeed to live:
It is a mockery and abuse of life.
I will not henceforth save myself by halves;
Lose all, or nothing.
Delio. Your own virtue save you!
I'll fetch your eldest son, and second you.
It may be that the sight of his own blood
Spread in so sweet a figure may beget
The more compassion. However, fare you well.
Though in our miseries Fortune have a part,
Yet in our noble suff'rings she hath none.
Contempt of pain, that we may call our own. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene IV.

([*Enter*] Cardinal, Pescara, Malatesti, Roderigo, *and* Grisolan.)

Card. You shall not watch to-night by the sick prince;
His grace is very well recover'd.

Mal. Good my lord, suffer us.
Card. O, by no means;
The noise, and change of object in his eye,
Doth more distract him. I pray, all to bed;
And though you hear him in his violent fit,
Do not rise, I entreat you.
Pes. So, sir; we shall not.
Card. Nay, I must have you promise
Upon your honours, for I was enjoin'd to't
By himself; and he seem'd to urge it sensibly.
Pes. Let our honours bind this trifle.
Card. Nor any of your followers.
Mal. Neither.
Card. It may be, to make trial of your promise,
When he's asleep, myself will rise and feign
Some of his mad tricks, and cry out for help,
And feign myself in danger.
Mal. If your throat were cutting,
I'd not come at you, now I have protested against it.
Card. Why, I thank you.
Gris. 'Twas a foul storm to-night.
Rod. The Lord Ferdinand's chamber shook like an osier.
Mal. 'Twas nothing but pure kindness in the devil
To rock his own child.
(*Exeunt* [*all except the* Cardinal].)
Card. The reason why I would not suffer these
About my brother, is, because at midnight
I may with better privacy convey
Julia's body to her own lodging. O, my conscience!
I would pray now; but the devil takes away my heart
For having any confidence in prayer.
About this hour I appointed Bosola
To fetch the body. When he hath serv'd my turn,
He dies. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* [Bosola].)

Bos. Ha! 'twas the cardinal's voice; I heard him name Bosola and my death. Listen; I hear one's footing.

[*Enter* Ferdinand.]

Ferd. Strangling is a very quiet death.
Bos. [*aside*]. Nay, then, I see I must stand upon my guard.
Ferd. What say to that? Whisper softly: do you agree to't? So; it must be done i' th' dark; the cardinal would not for a thousand pounds the doctor should see it. (*Exit.*)

Bos. My death is plotted; here's the consequence of murder.
We value not desert nor Christian breath,
When we know black deeds must be cur'd with death.

[*Enter* Antonio *and Servant.*]

Serv. Here stay, sir, and be confident, I pray;
I'll fetch you a dark lantern. (*Exit.*)
Ant. Could I take him at his prayers,
There were hope of pardon.
Bos. Fall right, my sword! —
[*Stabs him.*]
I'll not give thee so much leisure as to pray.
Ant. O, I am gone! Thou hast ended a long suit
In a minute.
Bos. What art thou?
Ant. A most wretched thing,
That only have thy benefit in death,
To appear myself.

[*Re-enter Servant with a lantern.*]

Serv. Where are you, sir?
Ant. Very near my home. — Bosola!
Serv. O, misfortune!
Bos. Smother thy pity, thou art dead else. — Antonio!
The man I would have sav'd 'bove mine own life!
We are merely the stars' tennis-balls, struck and banded
Which way please them. — O good Antonio,
I'll whisper one thing in thy dying ear
Shall make thy heart break quickly! Thy fair duchess
And two sweet children ——
Ant. Their very names
Kindle a little life in me.
Bos. Are murder'd.

Ant. Some men have wish'd to die
At the hearing of sad tidings; I am glad
That I shall do't in sadness. I would not now
Wish my wounds balm'd nor heal'd, for I have no use
To put my life to. In all our quest of greatness,
Like wanton boys whose pastime is their care,
We follow after bubbles blown in th' air.
Pleasure of life, what is't? Only the good hours
Of an ague; merely a preparative to rest,
To endure vexation. I do not ask
The process of my death; only commend me
To Delio.
Bos. Break, heart!
Ant. And let my son fly the courts of princes. [*Dies.*]
Bos. Thou seem'st to have lov'd Antonio.
Serv. I brought him hither,
To have reconcil'd him to the cardinal.
Bos. I do not ask thee that.
Take him up, if thou tender thine own life,
And bear him where the lady Julia
Was wont to lodge. — O, my fate moves swift!
I have this cardinal in the forge already;
Now I'll bring him to th' hammer. O direful misprision!
I will not imitate things glorious,
No more than base; I'll be mine own example. —
On, on, and look thou represent, for silence,
The thing thou bear'st. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene V.

([*Enter*] Cardinal, *with a book.*)

Card. I am puzzl'd in a question about hell;
He says, in hell there's one material fire,
And yet it shall not burn all men alike.
Lay him by. How tedious is a guilty conscience!
When I look into the fish-ponds in my garden,
Methinks I see a thing arm'd with a rake,
That seems to strike at me.

[*Enter* Bosola, *and Servant bearing* Antonio's *body.*]

Now, art thou come?
Thou look'st ghastly;
There sits in thy face some great determination
Mix'd with some fear.
Bos. Thus it lightens into action:
I am come to kill thee.
Card. Ha! — Help! our guard!
Bos. Thou art deceiv'd; they are out of thy howling.
Card. Hold; and I will faithfully divide
Revenues with thee.
Bos. Thy prayers and proffers
Are both unseasonable.
Card. Raise the watch!
We are betray'd!
Bos. I have confin'd your flight:
I'll suffer your retreat to Julia's chamber,
But no further.
Card. Help! we are betray'd!

[*Enter, above,* Pescara, Malatesti, Roderigo, *and* Grisolan.]

Mal. Listen.
Card. My dukedom for rescue!
Rod. Fie upon his counterfeiting!
Mal. Why, 'tis not the cardinal.
Rod. Yes, yes, 'tis he:
But, I'll see him hang'd ere I'll go down to him.
Card. Here's a plot upon me; I am assaulted! I am lost,
Unless some rescue!
Gris. He doth this pretty well;
But it will not serve to laugh me out of mine honour.
Card. The sword's at my throat!
Rod. You would not bawl so loud then.
Mal. Come, come, let's go to bed: he
told us this much aforehand.
Pes. He wish'd you should not come at him; but, believe't,
The accent of the voice sounds not in jest.
I'll down to him, howsoever, and with engines
Force ope the doors. [*Exit above.*]
Rod. Let's follow him aloof,

And note how the cardinal will laugh at him.
[*Exeunt, above,* Malatesti, Roderigo, *and* Grisolan.]
Bos. There's for you first,
'Cause you shall not unbarricade the door
To let in rescue. (*Kills the Servant.*)
Card. What cause hast thou to pursue my life?
Bos. Look there.
Card. Antonio!
Bos. Slain by my hand unwittingly.
Pray, and be sudden. When thou kill'd'st thy sister,
Thou took'st from Justice her most equal balance,
And left her naught but her sword.
Card. O, mercy!
Bos. Now it seems thy greatness was only outward;
For thou fall'st faster of thyself than calamity
Can drive thee. I'll not waste longer time; there! [*Stabs him.*]
Card. Thou hast hurt me.
Bos. Again!
Card. Shall I die like a leveret,
Without any resistance? — Help, help, help!
I am slain!

[*Enter* Ferdinand.]

Ferd. Th' alarum! Give me a fresh horse;
Rally the vaunt-guard, or the day is lost,
Yield, yield! I give you the honour of arms
Shake my sword over you; will you yield?
Card. Help me; I am your brother!
Ferd. The devil!
My brother fight upon the adverse party!
(*He wounds the* Cardinal, *and, in the scuffle, gives* Bosola *his death-wound.*)
There flies your ransom.
Card. O justice!
I suffer now for what hath former bin:
Sorrow is held the eldest child of sin.
Ferd. Now you're brave fellows. Caesar's fortune was harder than Pompey's; Caesar died in the arms of prosperity, Pompey at the feet of disgrace. You both died in the field. The pain's nothing; pain many times is taken away with the apprehension of greater, as the tooth-ache with the sight of a barber that comes to pull it out. There's philosophy for you.
Bos. Now my revenge is perfect. — Sink, thou main cause
(*Kills* Ferdinand.)
Of my undoing! — The last part of my life
Hath done me best service.
Ferd. Give me some wet hay; I am broken-winded.
I do account this world but a dog-kennel:
I will vault credit and affect high pleasures
Beyond death.
Bos. He seems to come to himself,
Now he's so near the bottom.
Ferd. My sister, O my sister! there's the cause on't.
Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust,
Like diamonds, we are cut with our own dust. [*Dies.*]
Card. Thou hast thy payment too.
Bos. Yes, I hold my weary soul in my teeth;
'Tis ready to part from me. I do glory
That thou, which stood'st like a huge pyramid
Begun upon a large and ample base,
Shalt end in a little point, a kind of nothing.

[*Enter, below,* Pescara, Malatesti, Roderigo, *and* Grisolan.]

Pes. How now, my lord!
Mal. O sad disaster!
Rod. How comes this?
Bos. Revenge for the Duchess of Malfi murdered
By th' Arragonian brethren; for Antonio
Slain by this hand; for lustful Julia
Poison'd by this man; and lastly for myself,
That was an actor in the main of all
Much 'gainst mine own good nature, yet i' th' end
Neglected.
Pes. How now, my lord!
Card. Look to my brother:
He gave us these large wounds, as we were struggling

Here i' th' rushes. And now, I pray, let me
Be laid by and never thought of. [*Dies.*]
Pes. How fatally, it seems, he did withstand
His own rescue!
Mal. Thou wretched thing of blood,
How came Antonio by his death?
Bos. In a mist; I know not how;
Such a mistake as I have often seen
In a play. O, I am gone!
We are only like dead walls or vaulted graves,
That, ruin'd, yield no echo. Fare you well!
It may be pain, but no harm, to me to die
In so good a quarrel. O, this gloomy world!
In what a shadow, or deep pit of darkness,
Doth womanish and fearful mankind live!
Let worthy minds ne'er stagger in distrust
To suffer death or shame for what is just:
Mine is another voyage. [*Dies.*]
Pes. The noble Delio, as I came to th' palace,
Told me of Antonio's being here, and show'd me
A pretty gentleman, his son and heir.

[*Enter* Delio, *and* Antonio's *Son.*]

Mal. O sir, you come too late!
Delio. I heard so, and
Was arm'd for't, ere I came. Let us make noble use
Of this great ruin; and join all our force
To establish this young hopeful gentleman
In's mother's right. These wretched eminent things
Leave no more fame behind 'em, than should one
Fall in a frost, and leave his print in snow;
As soon as the sun shines, it ever melts,
Both form and matter. I have ever thought
Nature doth nothing so great for great men
As when she's pleas'd to make them lords of truth:
Integrity of life is fame's best friend,
Which nobly, beyond death, shall crown the end. (*Exeunt.*)

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS

By PHILIP MASSINGER

(*c.* 1624)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

[Lord] Lovell, an English Lord.
Sir Giles Overreach, a cruel extortioner.
[Frank] Wellborn, a Prodigal.
[Tom] Allworth, a young Gentleman, Page to Lord Lovell.
Greedy, a hungry Justice of Peace.
Marrall, a Term-Driver; a creature of Sir Giles Overreach.
Order [Steward],
Amble [Usher], } Servants to the Lady Allworth.
Furnace [Cook],
Watchall [Porter],
Willdo, a Parson.
Tapwell, an Alehouse Keeper.
Three Creditors, Servants, &c.

The Lady Allworth, a rich Widow.
Margaret, Overreach his daughter.
Froth, Tapwell's Wife.
Chambermaid.
Waiting Woman.

[Scene — The Country near Nottingham.]

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS

ACT I.

Scene I.

([*Enter*] Wellborn [*in tattered apparel*], Tapwell, *and* Froth.)

Well. No bouse? nor no tobacco?
Tap. Not a suck, sir;
Nor the remainder of a single can
Left by a drunken porter, all night pall'd too.
Froth. Not the dropping of the tap for your morning's draught, sir.
'Tis verity, I assure you.
Well. Verity, you brach!
The devil turn'd precisian! Rogue, what am I?
Tap. Troth, durst I trust you with a looking-glass,
To let you see your trim shape, you would quit me
And take the name yourself.
Well. How, dog!
Tap. Even so, sir.
And I must tell you, if you but advance
Your Plymouth cloak you shall be soon instructed
There dwells, and within call, if it please your worship,
A potent monarch call'd the constable,
That does command a citadel call'd the stocks;
Whose guards are certain files of rusty billmen
Such as with great dexterity will hale
Your tatter'd, lousy ——
Well. Rascal! slave!
Froth. No rage, sir.
Tap. At his own peril. Do not put yourself
In too much heat, there being no water near
To quench your thirst; and sure, for other liquor,
As mighty ale, or beer, they are things, I take it,
You must no more remember; not in a dream, sir.
Well. Why, thou unthankful villain, dar'st thou talk thus!
Is not thy house, and all thou hast, my gift?
Tap. I find it not in chalk; and Timothy Tapwell
Does keep no other register.
Well. Am not I he
Whose riots fed and cloth'd thee? Wert thou not
Born on my father's land, and proud to be
A drudge in his house?
Tap. What I was, sir, it skills not;
What you are, is apparent. Now, for a farewell,
Since you talk of father, in my hope it will torment you,
I'll briefly tell your story. Your dead father,
My quondam master, was a man of worship,
Old Sir John Wellborn, justice of peace and *quorum*,
And stood fair to be *custos rotulorum;*
Bore the whole sway of the shire, kept a great house,
Reliev'd the poor, and so forth; but he dying,
And the twelve hundred a year coming to you,
Late Master Francis, but now forlorn Wellborn ——
Well. Slave, stop! or I shall lose myself.
Froth. Very hardly;
You cannot out of your way.
Tap. But to my story:
You were then a lord of acres, the prime gallant,
And I your under-butler. Note the change now:
You had a merry time of't; hawks and hounds;
With choice of running horses; mistresses

Of all sorts and all sizes, yet so hot,
As their embraces made your lordship melt;
Which your uncle, Sir Giles Overreach, observing,
(Resolving not to lose a drop of 'em,)
On foolish mortgages, statutes, and bonds,
For a while suppli'd your looseness, and then left you.

Well. Some curate hath penn'd this invective, mongrel,
And you have studied it.

Tap. I have not done yet.
Your land gone, and your credit not worth a token,
You grew a common borrower; no man scap'd
Your paper-pellets, from the gentleman
To the beggars on highways, that sold you switches
In your gallantry.

Well. I shall switch your brains out.

Tap. Where poor Tim Tapwell, with a little stock,
Some forty pounds or so, bought a small cottage;
Humbled myself to marriage with my Froth here,
Gave entertainment ——

Well. Yes, to whores and canters,
Clubbers by night.

Tap. True, but they brought in profit,
And had a gift to pay for what they call'd for,
And stuck not like your mastership. The poor income
I glean'd from them hath made me in my parish
Thought worthy to be scavenger, and in time
May rise to be overseer of the poor;
Which if I do, on your petition, Wellborn,
May allow you thirteen-pence a quarter,
And you shall thank my worship.

Well. Thus, you dog-bolt,
And thus —— (*Beats and kicks him.*)

Tap. [*to his wife.*] Cry out for help!

Well. Stir, and thou diest:
Your potent prince, the constable, shall not save you.
Hear me, ungrateful hell-hound! Did not I
Make purses for you? Then you lick'd my boots,
And thought your holiday cloak too coarse to clean 'em.
'Twas I that, when I heard thee swear if ever
Thou couldst arrive at forty pounds thou wouldst
Live like an emperor, 'twas I that gave it
In ready gold. Deny this, wretch!

Tap. I must, sir;
For, from the tavern to the taphouse, all,
On forfeiture of their licenses, stand bound
Ne'er to remember who their best guests were,
If they grew poor like you.

Well. They are well rewarded
That beggar themselves to make such cuckolds rich.
Thou viper, thankless viper! impudent bawd!
But since you have grown forgetful, I will help
Your memory, and tread you into mortar,
Nor leave one bone unbroken. [*Beats him again.*]

Tap. Oh!

Froth. Ask mercy.

(*Enter* Allworth.)

Well. 'Twill not be granted.

All. Hold — for my sake, hold.
Deny me, Frank? They are not worth your anger.

Well. For once thou hast redeem'd them from this sceptre;
But let 'em vanish, creeping on their knees,
And, if they grumble, I revoke my pardon.

Froth. This comes of your prating, husband; you presum'd
On your ambling wit, and must use your glib tongue,
Though you are beaten lame for't.

Tap. Patience, Froth;
There's law to cure our bruises.
(*They go off on their hands and knees.*)

Well. Sent to your mother?

All. My lady, Frank, my patroness, my all!
She's such a mourner for my father's death,
And, in her love to him, so favours me,
That I cannot pay too much observance to her.
There are few such stepdames.

Well. 'Tis a noble widow,
And keeps her reputation pure, and clear
From the least taint of infamy; her life,
With the splendour of her actions, leaves no tongue
To envy or detraction. Prithee tell me,
Has she no suitors?
All. Even the best of the shire, Frank,
My lord excepted; such as sue and send,
And send and sue again, but to no purpose;
Their frequent visits have not gain'd her presence.
Yet she's so far from sullenness and pride,
That I dare undertake you shall meet from her
A liberal entertainment. I can give you
A catalogue of her suitors' names.
Well. Forbear it,
While I give you good counsel: I am bound to it,
Thy father was my friend, and that affection
I bore to him, in right descends to thee;
Thou art a handsome and a hopeful youth,
Nor will I have the least affront stick on thee,
If I with any danger can prevent it.
All. I thank your noble care; but, pray you, in what
Do I run the hazard?
Well. Art thou not in love?
Put it not off with wonder.
All. In love, at my years!
Well. You think you walk in clouds, but are transparent.
I have heard all, and the choice that you have made,
And, with my finger, can point out the north star
By which the loadstone of your folly's guided;
And, to confirm this true, what think you of
Fair Margaret, the only child and heir
Of Cormorant Overreach? Does it blush and start,
To hear her only nam'd? Blush at your want
Of wit and reason.
All. You are too bitter, sir.
Well. Wounds of this nature are not to be cur'd
With balms, but corrosives. I must be plain:
Art thou scarce manumis'd from the porter's lodge
And yet sworn servant to the pantofle,
And dar'st thou dream of marriage? I fear
'Twill be concluded for impossible
That there is now, or e'er shall be hereafter,
A handsome page or player's boy of fourteen
But either loves a wench, or drabs love him;
Court-waiters not exempted.
All. This is madness.
Howe'er you have discover'd my intents,
You know my aims are lawful; and if ever
The queen of flowers, the glory of the spring,
The sweetest comfort to our smell, the rose,
Sprang from an envious briar, I may infer
There's such disparity in their conditions
Between the goodness of my soul, the daughter,
And the base churl of her father.
Well. Grant this true,
As I believe it, canst thou ever hope
To enjoy a quiet bed with her whose father
Ruin'd thy state?
All. And yours too.
Well. I confess it;
True; I must tell you as a friend, and freely,
That, where impossibilities are apparent,
'Tis indiscretion to nourish hopes.
Canst thou imagine (let not self-love blind thee)
That Sir Giles Overreach, that, to make her great
In swelling titles, without touch of conscience
Will cut his neighbour's throat, and I hope his own too,
Will e'er consent to make her thine? Give o'er,
And think of some course suitable to thy rank,
And prosper in it.
All. You have well advis'd me.
But in the meantime you that are so studious
Of my affairs wholly neglect your own.
Remember yourself, and in what plight you are.

Well. No matter, no matter.
All. Yes, 'tis much material.
You know my fortune and my means; yet something
I can spare from myself to help your wants.
Well. How's this?
All. Nay, be not angry; there's eight pieces
To put you in better fashion.
Well. Money from thee!
From a boy. A stipendiary! One that lives
At the devotion of a stepmother
And the uncertain favour of a lord!
I'll eat my arms first. Howsoe'er blind Fortune
Hath spent the utmost of her malice on me ——
Though I am vomited out of an alehouse,
And thus accoutred — know not where to eat,
Or drink, or sleep, but underneath this canopy —
Although I thank thee, I despise thy offer;
And as I in my madness broke my state
Without th' assistance of another's brain,
In my right wits I'll piece it; at the worst,
Die thus and be forgotten.
All. A strange humour! (*Exeunt.*)

Scene II.

([*Enter*] Order, Amble, Furnace, *and* Watchall.)

Ord. Set all things right, or, as my name is Order,
And by this staff of office that commands you,
This chain and double ruff, symbols of power,
Whoever misses in his function,
For one whole week makes forfeiture of his breakfast
And privilege in the wine-cellar.
Amb. You are merry,
Good master steward.
Furn. Let him; I'll be angry.
Amb. Why, fellow Furnace, 'tis not twelve o'clock yet,
Nor dinner taking up; then, 'tis allow'd,
Cooks, by their places, may be choleric.
Furn. You think you have spoke wisely, goodman Amble,
My lady's go-before!
Ord. Nay, nay, no wrangling.
Furn. Twit me with the authority of the kitchen!
At all hours, and all places, I'll be angry;
And thus provok'd, when I am at my prayers
I will be angry.
Amb. There was no hurt meant.
Furn. I am friends with thee; and yet I will be angry.
Ord. With whom?
Furn. No matter whom: yet, now I think on it,
I am angry with my lady.
Watch. Heaven forbid, man!
Ord. What cause has she given thee?
Furn. Cause enough, master steward.
I was entertain'd by her to please her palate,
And, till she forswore eating, I perform'd it.
Now, since our master, noble Allworth, died,
Though I crack my brains to find out tempting sauces,
And raise fortifications in the pastry
Such as might serve for models in the Low Countries,
Which, if they had been practised at Breda,
Spinola might have thrown his cap at it, and ne'er took it ——
Amb. But you had wanted matter there to work on.
Furn. Matter! with six eggs, and a strike of rye meal,
I had kept the town till doomsday, perhaps longer.
Ord. But what's this to your pet against my lady?
Furn. What's this? Marry this: when I am three parts roasted
And the fourth part parboil'd to prepare her viands,
She keeps her chamber, dines with a panada
Or water-gruel, my sweat never thought on.
Ord. But your art is seen in the dining-room.
Furn. By whom?
By such as pretend love to her, but come

To feed upon her. Yet, of all the harpies
That do devour her, I am out of charity
With none so much as the thin-gutted squire
That's stolen into commission.
ORD. Justice Greedy?
FURN. The same, the same; meat's cast away upon him,
It never thrives; he holds this paradox,
Who eats not well, can ne'er do justice well.
His stomach's as insatiate as the grave,
Or strumpet's ravenous appetites.
(*Knocking.*)
WATCH. One knocks.

(*Enter* ALLWORTH.)

ORD. Our late young master!
AMB. Welcome, sir.
FURN. Your hand;
If you have a stomach, a cold bake-meat's ready.
ORD. His father's picture in little.
FURN. We are all your servants.
AMB. In you he lives.
ALL. At once, my thanks to all;
This is yet some comfort. Is my lady stirring?

(*Enter* LADY ALLWORTH, *Waiting Woman, and Chambermaid.*)

ORD. Her presence answers for us.
L. ALL. Sort those silks well.
I'll take the air alone.
(*Exeunt W. Woman and Chambermaid.*)
FURN. You air and air;
But will you never taste but spoon-meat more?
To what use serve I?
L. ALL. Prithee, be not angry;
I shall ere long: i' the mean time, there is gold
To buy thee aprons, and a summer suit.
FURN. I am appeas'd, and Furnace now grows cool.
L. ALL. And, as I gave directions, if this morning
I am visited by any, entertain 'em
As heretofore; but say, in my excuse,
I am indispos'd.
ORD. I shall, madam.
L. ALL. Do, and leave them.
Nay, stay you, Allworth.
(*Exeunt* ORDER, AMBLE, FURNACE, *and* WATCHALL.)
ALL. I shall gladly grow here,
To wait on your commands.
L. ALL. So soon turn'd courtier!
ALL. Style not that courtship, madam, which is duty
Purchas'd on your part.
L. ALL. Well, you shall o'ercome;
I'll not contend in words. How is it with
Your noble master?
ALL. Ever like himself,
No scruple lessen'd in the full weight of honour.
He did command me, pardon my presumption,
As his unworthy deputy, to kiss
Your ladyship's fair hands.
L. ALL. I am honour'd in
His favour to me. Does he hold his purpose
For the Low Countries?
ALL. Constantly, good madam;
But he will in person first present his service.
L. ALL. And how approve you of his course? You are yet
Like virgin parchment, capable of any
Inscription, vicious or honourable.
I will not force your will, but leave you free
To your own election.
ALL. Any form you please
I will put on; but, might I make my choice,
With humble emulation I would follow
The path my lord marks to me.
L. ALL. 'Tis well answer'd,
And I commend your spirit. You had a father,
Blest be his memory! that some few hours
Before the will of Heaven took him from me,
Who did commend you, by the dearest ties
Of perfect love between us, to my charge;
And, therefore, what I speak you are bound to hear
With such respect as if he liv'd in me.
He was my husband, and howe'er you are not
Son of my womb, you may be of my love,
Provided you deserve it.

ALL. I have found you,
Most honour'd madam, the best mother to me;
And, with my utmost strengths of care and service,
Will labour that you never may repent
Your bounties shower'd upon me.
L. ALL. I much hope it.
These were your father's words: "If e'er my son
Follow the war, tell him it is a school
Where all the principles tending to honour
Are taught, if truly followed: but for such
As repair thither as a place in which
They do presume they may with license practise
Their lusts and riots, they shall never merit
The noble name of soldiers. To dare boldly
In a fair cause, and for their country's safety
To run upon the cannon's mouth undaunted;
To obey their leaders, and shun mutinies;
To bear with patience the winter's cold
And summer's scorching heat, and not to faint,
When plenty of provision fails, with hunger;
Are the essential parts make up a soldier,
Not swearing, dice, or drinking."
ALL. There's no syllable
You speak, but is to me an oracle,
Which but to doubt were impious.
L. ALL. To conclude:
Beware ill company, for often men
Are like to those with whom they do converse;
And, from one man I warn you, and that's Wellborn:
Not 'cause he's poor, that rather claims your pity;
But that he's in his manners so debauch'd,
And hath to vicious courses sold himself.
'Tis true, your father lov'd him, while he was
Worthy the loving; but if he had liv'd
To have seen him as he is, he had cast him off,
As you must do.
ALL. I shall obey in all things.
L. ALL. Follow me to my chamber, you shall have gold
To furnish you like my son, and still supplied,
As I hear from you.
ALL. I am still your creature. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

([*Enter*] OVERREACH, GREEDY, ORDER, AMBLE, FURNACE, WATCHALL, *and* MARRALL.)

GREEDY. Not to be seen!
OVER. Still cloistered up! Her reason
I hope, assures her, though she make herself
Close prisoner ever for her husband's loss,
'Twill not recover him.
ORD. Sir, it is her will,
Which we, that are her servants, ought to serve it,
And not dispute. Howe'er, you are nobly welcome;
And, if you please to stay, that you may think so,
There came, not six days since, from Hull, a pipe
Of rich Canary, which shall spend itself
For my lady's honour.
GREEDY. Is it of the right race?
ORD. Yes, Master Greedy.
AMB. How his mouth runs o'er!
FURN. I'll make it run, and run. Save your good worship!
GREEDY. Honest Master Cook, thy hand; again, how I love thee!
Are the good dishes still in being? Speak, boy.
FURN. If you have a mind to feed, there is a chine
Of beef, well seasoned.
GREEDY. Good!
FURN. A pheasant, larded.
GREEDY. That I might now give thanks for't!
FURN. Other kickshaws.
Besides, there came last night, from the forest of Sherwood,
The fattest stag I ever cook'd.
GREEDY. A stag, man
FURN. A stag, sir; part of it prepar'd for dinner,
And bak'd in puff-paste.
GREEDY. Puff-paste too! Sir Giles

A ponderous chine of beef! a pheasant larded!
And red deer too, Sir Giles, and bak'd in puff-paste!
All business set aside, let us give thanks here.
Furn. How the lean skeleton's rapt!
Over. You know we cannot.
Mar. Your worships are to sit on a commission,
And if you fail to come, you lose the cause.
Greedy. Cause me no causes. I'll prove't, for such dinner
We may put off a commission: you shall find it
Henrici decimo quarto.
Over. Fie, Master Greedy!
Will you lose me a thousand pounds for a dinner?
No more, for shame! We must forget the belly
When we think of profit.
Greedy. Well, you shall o'er-rule me;
I could ev'n cry now. — Do you hear, Master Cook,
Send but a corner of that immortal pasty,
And I, in thankfulness, will, by your boy,
Send you — a brace of three-pences.
Furn. Will you be so prodigal?

(*Enter* Wellborn.)

Over. Remember me to your lady. Who have we here?
Well. You know me.
Over. I did once, but now I will not;
Thou art no blood of mine. Avaunt, thou beggar!
If ever thou presume to own me more,
I'll have thee cag'd and whipp'd.
Greedy. I'll grant the warrant.
Think of Pie-corner, Furnace!
(*Exeunt* Overreach, Greedy, *and* Marrall.)
Watch. Will you out, sir?
I wonder how you durst creep in.
Ord. This is rudeness,
And saucy impudence.
Amb. Cannot you stay
To be serv'd, among your fellows, from the basket,
But you must needs press into the hall?
Furn. Prithee, vanish
Into some outhouse, though it be the pigstye;
My scullion shall come to thee.

(*Enter* Allworth.)

Well. This is rare.
Oh, here's Tom Allworth! Tom!
All. We must be strangers;
Nor would I have you seen here for a million. (*Exit.*)
Well. Better and better. He contemns me too!

(*Enter Waiting Woman and Chambermaid.*)

Woman. Foh, what a smell's here! What thing's this?
Cham. A creature
Made out of the privy; let us hence, for love's sake.
Or I shall swoon.
Woman. I begin to feel faint already.
(*Exeunt W. Woman and Chambermaid.*)
Watch. Will you know your way;
Amb. Or shall we teach it you,
By the head and shoulders?
Well. No; I will not stir;
Do you mark, I will not: let me see the wretch
That dares attempt to force me. Why, you slaves,
Created only to make legs, and cringe;
To carry in a dish, and shift a trencher;
That have not souls only to hope a blessing
Beyond black-jacks or flagons; you, that were born
Only to consume meat and drink, and batten
Upon reversions! — who advances? Who
Shews me the way?
Ord. My lady!

(*Enter* Lady Allworth, *Waiting Woman, and Chambermaid.*)

Cham. Here's the monster.
Woman. Sweet madam, keep your glove to your nose.
Cham. Or let me
Fetch some perfumes may be predominant;
You wrong yourself else.
Well. Madam, my designs
Bear me to you.

L. All. To me!
Well. And though I have met with
But ragged entertainment from your grooms here,
I hope from you to receive that noble usage
As may become the true friend of your husband,
And then I shall forget these.
L. All. I am amaz'd
To see and hear this rudeness. Dar'st thou think,
Though sworn, that it can ever find belief,
That I, who to the best men of this country
Deni'd my presence since my husband's death,
Can fall so low as to change words with thee?
Thou son of infamy, forbear my house,
And know and keep the distance that's between us;
Or, though it be against my gentler temper,
I shall take order you no more shall be
An eyesore to me.
Well. Scorn me not, good lady;
But, as in form you are angelical,
Imitate the heavenly natures, and vouchsafe
At the least awhile to hear me. You will grant
The blood that runs in this arm is as noble
As that which fills your veins; those costly jewels,
And those rich clothes you wear, your men's observance
And women's flattery, are in you no virtues,
Nor these rags, with my poverty, in me vices.
You have a fair fame, and, I know, deserve it;
Yet, lady, I must say, in nothing more
Than in the pious sorrow you have shewn
For your late noble husband.
Ord. How she starts!
Furn. And hardly can keep finger from the eye,
To hear him nam'd.
L. All. Have you aught else to say?
Well. That husband, madam, was once in his fortune
Almost as low as I; want, debts, and quarrels
Lay heavy on him: let it not be thought
A boast in me, though I say I reliev'd him.
'Twas I that gave him fashion; mine the sword
That did on all occasions second his;
I brought him on and off with honour, lady;
And when in all men's judgments he was sunk,
And, in his own hopes, not to be buoy'd up,
I stepp'd unto him, took him by the hand,
And set him upright.
Furn. Are not we base rogues,
That could forget this?
Well. I confess, you made him
Master of your estate; nor could your friends,
Though he brought no wealth with him, blame you for't;
For he had a shape, and to that shape a mind
Made up of all parts either great or noble;
So winning a behaviour, not to be
Resisted, madam.
L. All. 'Tis most true, he had.
Well. For his sake, then. in that I was his friend,
Do not contemn me.
L. All. For what's past excuse me,
I will redeem it. Order, give the gentleman
A hundred pounds.
Well. No, madam, on no terms:
I will nor beg nor borrow sixpence of you,
But be suppli'd elsewhere, or want thus ever.
Only one suit I make, which you deny not
To strangers; and 'tis this. (*Whispers to her.*)
L. All. Fie! nothing else?
Well. Nothing, unless you please to charge your servants
To throw away a little respect upon me.
L. All. What you demand is yours.
Well. I thank you, lady.
Now what can be wrought out of such a suit
Is yet in supposition: I have said all;
When you please, you may retire. —
[*Exit* Lady All.]
Nay, all's forgotten; [*To the Servants.*]
And, for a lucky omen to my project,
Shake hands, and end all quarrels in the cellar.

Ord. Agreed, agreed.
Furn. Still merry Master Wellborn.
(*Exeunt.*)

ACT II.

Scene I.

(*Enter* Overreach *and* Marrall.)

Over. He's gone, I warrant thee; this commission crush'd him.
Mar. Your worships have the way on't, and ne'er miss
To squeeze these unthrifts into air; and yet,
The chapfallen justice did his part, returning
For your advantage the certificate,
Against his conscience, and his knowledge too,
With your good favour, to the utter ruin
Of the poor farmer.
Over. 'Twas for these good ends
I made him a justice; he that bribes his belly,
Is certain to command his soul.
Mar. I wonder,
Still with your license, why your worship having
The power to put his thin-gut in commission,
You are not in't yourself?
Over. Thou art a fool;
In being out of office I am out of danger;
Where, if I were a justice, besides the trouble,
I might, or out of wilfulness or error,
Run myself finely into a *premunire*,
And so become a prey to the informer.
No, I'll have none of't; 'tis enough I keep
Greedy at my devotion; so he serve
My purposes, let him hang or damn, I care not;
Friendship is but a word.
Mar. You are all wisdom.
Over. I would be worldly wise; for the other wisdom,
That does prescribe us a well govern'd life,
And to do right to others as ourselves,
I value not an atom.
Mar. What course take you,
With your good patience, to hedge in the manor
Of your neighbour, Master Frugal? as 'tis said
He will nor sell, nor borrow, nor exchange;
And his land, lying in the midst of your many lordships,
Is a foul blemish.
Over. I have thought on't, Marrall,
And it shall take. I must have all men sellers,
And I the only purchaser.
Mar. 'Tis most fit, sir.
Over. I'll therefore buy some cottage near his manor,
Which done, I'll make my men break ope his fences,
Ride o'er his standing corn, and in the night
Set fire on his barns, or break his cattle's legs.
These trespasses draw on suits and suits expenses,
Which I can spare, but will soon beggar him.
When I have harried him thus two or three year,
Though he sue *in forma pauperis*, in spite
Of all his thrift and care, he'll grow behindhand.
Mar. The best I ever heard! I could adore you.
Over. Then, with the favour of my man of law,
I will pretend some title. Want will force him
To put it to arbitrement; then, if he sell
For half the value, he shall have ready money,
And I possess his land.
Mar. 'Tis above wonder!
Wellborn was apt to sell, and needed not
Those fine arts, sir, to hook him in.
Over. Well thought on.
This varlet, Marrall, lives too long, to upbraid me
With my close cheat upon him. Will nor cold
Nor hunger kill him?
Mar. I know not what to think on't.
I have us'd all means; and the last night I caus'd
His host, the tapster, to turn him out of doors;

And have been since with all your friends and tenants,
And, on the forfeit of your favour, charg'd them,
Though a crust of mouldy bread would keep him from starving,
Yet they should not relieve him. This is done, sir.
Over. That was something, Marrall; but thou must go further,
And suddenly, Marrall.
Mar. Where, and when you please, sir.
Over. I would have thee seek him out, and, if thou canst,
Persuade him that 'tis better steal than beg;
Then, if I prove he has but robb'd a hen-roost,
Not all the world shall save him from the gallows.
Do any thing to work him to despair;
And 'tis thy masterpiece.
Mar. I will do my best, sir.
Over. I am now on my main work with the Lord Lovell,
The gallant-minded, popular Lord Love
The minion of the people's love. I hear
He's come into the country, and my aims are
To insinuate myself into his knowledge,
And then invite him to my house.
Mar. I have you;
This points at my young mistress.
Over. She must part with
That humble title, and write honourable,
Right honourable, Marrall, my right honourable daughter,
If all I have, or e'er shall get, will do it.
I'll have her well attended; there are ladies
Of errant knights decay'd and brought so low,
That for cast clothes and meat will gladly serve her.
And 'tis my glory, though I come from the city,
To have their issue whom I have undone,
To kneel to mine as bondslaves.
Mar. 'Tis fit state, sir.
Over. And therefore, I'll not have a chambermaid
That ties her shoes, or any meaner office,
But such whose fathers were right worshipful.
'Tis a rich man's pride! there having ever been
More than a feud, a strange antipathy,
Between us and true gentry.

(*Enter* Wellborn.)

Mar. See, who's here, sir.
Over. Hence, monster! prodigy!
Well. Sir, your wife's nephew;
She and my father tumbled in one belly.
Over. Avoid my sight! thy breath's infectious, rogue!
I shun thee as a leprosy, or the plague.
Come hither, Marrall — [*aside*] this is the time to work him. (*Exit.*)
Mar. I warrant you, sir.
Well. By this light I think he's mad.
Mar. Mad! had you ta'en compassion on yourself,
You long since had been mad.
Well. You have ta'en a course,
Between you and my venerable uncle,
To make me so.
Mar. The more pale-spirited you.
That would not be instructed. I swear deeply ——
Well. By what?
Mar. By my religion.
Well. Thy religion!
The devil's creed: — but what would you have done?
Mar. Had there been but one tree in all the shire,
Nor any hope to compass a penny halter,
Before, like you, I had outliv'd my fortunes,
A withe had serv'd my turn to hang myself.
I am zealous in your cause; pray you hang yourself,
And presently, as you love your credit.
Well. I thank you.
Mar. Will you stay till you die in a ditch, or lice devour you? ——
Or, if you dare not do the feat yourself,
But that you'll put the state to charge and trouble,
Is there no purse to be cut, house to be broken,
Or market-woman with eggs, that you may murder,

And so dispatch the business?
Well. Here's variety,
I must confess; but I'll accept of none
Of all your gentle offers, I assure you.
Mar. Why, have you hope ever to eat again,
Or drink? or be the master of three farthings?
If you like not hanging, drown yourself! Take some course
For your reputation.
Well. 'Twill not do, dear tempter,
With all the rhetoric the fiend hath taught you.
I am as far as thou art from despair;
Nay, I have confidence, which is more than hope,
To live, and suddenly, better than ever.
Mar. Ha! ha! these castles you build in the air
Will not persuade me to give or lend
A token to you.
Well. I'll be more kind to thee:
Come, thou shalt dine with me.
Mar. With you!
Well. Nay more, dine gratis.
Mar. Under what hedge, I pray you? or at whose cost?
Are they padders or abram-men that are your consorts?
Well. Thou art incredulous; but thou shalt dine
Not alone at her house, but with a gallant lady;
With me, and with a lady.
Mar. Lady! what lady?
With the Lady of the Lake, or Queen of Fairies?
For I know it must be an enchanted dinner.
Well. With the Lady Allworth, knave.
Mar. Nay, now there's hope
Thy brain is crack'd.
Well. Mark there, with what respect
I am entertain'd.
Mar. With choice, no doubt, of dog-whips.
Why, dost thou ever hope to pass her porter?
Well. 'Tis not far off, go with me; trust thine own eyes.
Mar. Troth, in my hope, or my assurance rather,
To see thee curvet and mount like a dog in a blanket,
If ever thou presume to pass her threshold,
I will endure thy company.
Well. Come along then. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene II.

([*Enter*] Allworth, *Waiting Woman, Chambermaid,* Order, Amble, Furnace, *and* Watchall.)

Woman. Could you not command your leisure one hour longer?
Cham. Or half an hour?
All. I have told you what my haste is:
Besides, being now another's, not mine own,
Howe'er I much desire to enjoy you longer,
My duty suffers, if, to please myself,
I should neglect my lord.
Woman. Pray you do me the favour
To put these few quince-cakes into your pocket;
They are of mine own preserving.
Cham. And this marmalade;
'Tis comfortable for your stomach.
Woman. And, at parting,
Excuse me if I beg a farewell from you.
Cham. You are still before me. I move the same suit, sir.
([Allworth] *kisses them severally.*)
Furn. How greedy these chamberers are of a beardless chin!
I think the tits will ravish him.
All. My service
To both.
Woman. Ours waits on you.
Cham. And shall do ever.
Ord. You are my lady's charge, be therefore careful
That you sustain your parts.
Woman. We can bear, I warrant you.
(*Exeunt W. Woman and Chambermaid.*)
Furn. Here, drink it off; the ingredients are cordial,
And this the true elixir; it hath boil'd
Since midnight for you. 'Tis the quintessence
Of five cocks of the game, ten dozen of sparrows,
Knuckles of veal, potato-roots and marrow,

Coral and ambergris. Were you two years older,
And I had a wife, or gamesome mistress,
I durst trust you with neither. You need not bait
After this, I warrant you, though your journey's long;
You may ride on the strength of this till to-morrow morning.

All. Your courtesies overwhelm me: I much grieve
To part from such true friends; and yet find comfort,
My attendance on my honourable lord,
Whose resolution holds to visit my lady,
Will speedily bring me back.

(*Knocking at the gate.*)

Mar. (*within*). Dar'st thou venture further?

Well. (*within*). Yes, yes, and knock again.

Ord. 'Tis he; disperse!

Amb. Perform it bravely.

Furn. I know my cue, ne'er doubt me.

(*Exeunt* [*all but* Allworth].)

[*Enter* Watchall, *ceremoniously introducing* Wellborn *and* Marrall.]

Watch. Beast that I was, to make you stay! Most welcome;
You were long since expected.

Well. Say so much
To my friend, I pray you.

Watch. For your sake, I will, sir.

Mar. For his sake!

Well. Mum; this is nothing.

Mar. More than ever
I would have believ'd, though I had found it in my primer.

All. When I have given your reasons for my late harshness,
You'll pardon and excuse me; for, believe me,
Though now I part abruptly, in my service
I will deserve it.

Mar. Service! with a vengeance!

Well. I am satisfied: farewell, Tom.

All. All joy stay with you! (*Exit.*)

(*Re-enter* Amble.)

Amb. You are happily encounter'd; I yet never
Presented one so welcome as I know
You will be to my lady.

Mar. This is some vision,
Or, sure, these men are mad, to worship a dunghill;
It cannot be a truth.

Well. Be still a pagan,
An unbelieving infidel; be so, miscreant,
And meditate on "blankets, and on dog-whips!"

(*Re-enter* Furnace.)

Furn. I am glad you are come; until I know your pleasure
I knew not how to serve up my lady's dinner.

Mar. His pleasure! is it possible?

Well. What's thy will?

Furn. Marry, sir, I have some grouse, and turkey chicken,
Some rails and quails, and my lady will'd me ask you,
What kind of sauces best affect your palate,
That I may use my utmost skill to please it.

Mar. [*aside*]. The devil's enter'd this cook. Sauce for his palate!
That, on my knowledge, for almost this twelve-month,
Durst wish but cheese-parings and brown bread on Sundays.

Well. That way I like 'em best.

Furn. It shall be done, sir. (*Exit.*)

Well. What think you of "the hedge we shall dine under?"
Shall we feed gratis?

Mar. I know not what to think;
Pray you make me not mad.

(*Re-enter* Order.)

Ord. This place becomes you not,
Pray you walk, sir, to the dining room.

Well. I am well here,
Till her ladyship quits her chamber.

Mar. Well here, say you?
'Tis a rare change! But yesterday you thought
Yourself well in a barn, wrapp'd up in peas-straw.

(*Re-enter Waiting Woman and Chambermaid.*)

Woman. O! sir, you are wish'd for.

Cham. My lady dreamt, sir, of you.

WOMAN. And the first command she gave, after she rose,
Was (her devotions done) to give her notice
When you approach'd here.
CHAM. Which is done, on my virtue.
MAR. I shall be converted; I begin to grow
Into a new belief, which saints nor angels
Could have won me to have faith in.
WOMAN. Sir, my lady!

(*Enter* LADY ALLWORTH.)

L. ALL. I come to meet you, and languish'd till I saw you.
This first kiss is for form; I allow a second
To such a friend. [*Kisses* WELLBORN.]
MAR. To such a friend! Heaven bless me!
WELL. I am wholly yours; yet, madam, if you please
To grace this gentleman with a salute ——
MAR. Salute me at his bidding!
WELL. I shall receive it
As a most high favour.
L. ALL. Sir, you may command me.
[*Advances to kiss* MARRALL, *who retires*.]
WELL. Run backward from a lady! and such a lady!
MAR. To kiss her foot is, to poor me, a favour
I am unworthy of. (*Offers to kiss her foot.*)
L. ALL. Nay, pray you rise;
And since you are so humble, I'll exalt you.
You shall dine with me to-day, at mine own table.
MAR. Your ladyship's table! I am not good enough
To sit at your steward's board.
L. ALL. You are too modest;
I will not be deni'd.

(*Re-enter* FURNACE.)

FURN. Will you still be babbling
Till your meat freeze on the table? The old trick still;
My art ne'er thought on!
L. ALL. Your arm, Master Wellborn: —
Nay, keep us company. [*To* MARRALL.]
MAR. I was ne'er so grac'd.

(*Exeunt* WELLBORN, LADY ALLWORTH, AMBLE, MARRALL, *W. Woman*, [*and Chambermaid*].)

ORD. So! we have play'd our parts, and are come off well;
But if I know the mystery, why my lady
Consented to it, or why Master Wellborn
Desir'd it, may I perish!
FURN. Would I had
The roasting of his heart that cheated him,
And forces the poor gentleman to these shifts!
By fire! for cooks are Persians, and swear by it,
Of all the griping and extorting tyrants
I ever heard or read of, I ne'er met
A match to Sir Giles Overreach.
WATCH. What will you take
To tell him so, fellow Furnace?
FURN. Just as much
As my throat is worth, for that would be the price on't.
To have a usurer that starves himself,
And wears a cloak of one and twenty years
On a suit of fourteen groats, bought of the hangman,
To grow rich, and then purchase, is too common;
But this Sir Giles feeds high, keeps many servants,
Who must at his command do any outrage;
Rich in his habit, vast in his expenses;
Yet he to admiration still increases
In wealth and lordships.
ORD. He frights men out of their estates,
And breaks through all law-nets, made to curb ill men,
As they were cobwebs. No man dares reprove him.
Such a spirit to dare and power to do were never
Lodg'd so unluckily.

(*Re-enter* AMBLE [*laughing*].)

AMB. Ha! ha! I shall burst.
ORD. Contain thyself, man.
FURN. Or make us partakers
Of your sudden mirth.
AMB. Ha! ha! my lady has got
Such a guest at her table! — this term-driver, Marrall,

This snip of an attorney ——
Furn. What of him, man?
Amb. The knave thinks still he's at the cook's shop in Ram Alley,
Where the clerks divide, and the elder is to choose;
And feeds so slovenly!
Furn. Is this all?
Amb. My lady
Drank to him for fashion sake, or to please Master Wellborn;
As I live, he rises, and takes up a dish
In which there were some remnants of a boil'd capon,
And pledges her in white broth!
Furn. Nay, 'tis like
The rest of his tribe.
Amb. And when I brought him wine,
He leaves his stool, and, after a leg or two,
Most humbly thanks my worship.
Ord. Risen already!
Amb. I shall be chid.

(*Re-enter* Lady Allworth, Wellborn, *and* Marrall.)

Furn. My lady frowns.
L. All. You wait well! [*To* Amble.]
Let me have no more of this: I observ'd your jeering.
Sirrah, I'll have you know, whom I think worthy
To sit at my table, be he ne'er so mean,
When I am present, is not your companion.
Ord. Nay, she'll preserve what's due to her.
Furn. This refreshing
Follows your flux of laughter.
L. All. [*to* Wellborn.] You are master
Of your own will. I know so much of manners,
As not to inquire your purposes; in a word,
To me you are ever welcome, as to a house
That is your own.
Well. [*aside* to Marrall]. Mark that.
Mar. With reverence, sir,
An it like your worship.
Well. Trouble yourself no further,
Dear madam; my heart's full of zeal and service,
However in my language I am sparing.
Come, Master Marrall.
Mar. I attend your worship.
(*Exeunt* Wellborn *and* Marrall.)
L. All. I see in your looks you are sorry, and you know me
An easy mistress. Be merry; I have forgot all.
Order and Furnace, come with me; I must give you
Further directions.
Ord. What you please,
Furn. We are ready.
(*Exeunt.*)

Scene III.

([*Enter*] Wellborn, *and* Marrall [*bare-headed*].)

Well. I think I am in a good way.
Mar. Good! Sir, the best way.
The certain best way.
Well. There are casualties
That men are subject to.
Mar. You are above 'em,
And as you are already worshipful,
I hope ere long you will increase in worship,
And be right worshipful.
Well. Prithee do not flout me:
What I shall be, I shall be. Is't for your ease,
You keep your hat off?
Mar. Ease! an it like your worship!
I hope Jack Marrall shall not live so long,
To prove himself such an unmannerly beast,
Though it hail hazel-nuts, as to be cover'd
When your worship's present.
Well. (*aside*). Is not this a true rogue,
That, out of mere hope of a future coz'nage,
Can turn thus suddenly? 'Tis rank already.
Mar. I know your worship's wise, and needs no counsel,
Yet if, in my desire to do you service,
I humbly offer my advice, (but still
Under correction,) I hope I shall not
Incur your high displeasure.
Well. No; speak freely.
Mar. Then, in my judgment, sir, my simple judgment,
(Still with your worship's favour,) I could wish you
A better habit, for this cannot be

But much distasteful to the noble lady
(I say no more) that loves you; for, this morning,
To me, and I am but a swine to her,
Before th' assurance of her wealth perfum'd you,
You savour'd not of amber.
Well. I do now then!
Mar. This your batoon hath got a touch of it.——
(*Kisses the end of his cudgel.*)
Yet, if you please, for change, I have twenty pounds here,
Which, out of my true love, I'll presently
Lay down at your worship's feet; 'twill serve to buy you
A riding suit.
Well. But where's the horse?
Mar. My gelding
Is at your service; nay, you shall ride me,
Before your worship shall be put to the trouble
To walk afoot. Alas, when you are lord
Of this lady's manor, as I know you will be,
You may with the lease of glebe land, called Knave's-acre,
A place I would manure, requite your vassal.
Well. I thank thy love, but must make no use of it;
What's twenty pounds?
Mar. 'Tis all that I can make, sir.
Well. Dost thou think, though I want clothes, I could not have 'em,
For one word to my lady?
Mar. As I know not that!
Well. Come, I will tell thee a secret, and so leave thee.
I will not give her the advantage, though she be
A gallant-minded lady, after we are married,
(There being no woman but is sometimes froward,)
To hit me in the teeth, and say, she was forc'd
To buy my wedding-clothes, and took me on
With a plain riding-suit, and an ambling nag.
No, I'll be furnish'd something like myself,
And so farewell: for thy suit touching Knave's-acre,
When it is mine, 'tis thine.
Mar. I thank your worship.
(*Exit* Well.)
How was I cozen'd in the calculation
Of this man's fortune! My master cozen'd too,
Whose pupil I am in the art of undoing men;
For that is our profession! Well, well, Master Wellborn,
You are of a sweet nature, and fit again to be cheated:
Which, if the Fates please, when you are possess'd
Of the land and lady, you, sans question, shall be.
I'll presently think of the means.
(*Walks by, musing.*)

(*Enter* Overreach, [*speaking to a Servant within*].)

Over. Sirrah, take my horse.
I'll walk to get me an appetite; 'tis but a mile,
And exercise will keep me from being pursy.
Ha! Marrall! Is he conjuring? Perhaps
The knave has wrought the prodigal to do
Some outrage on himself, and now he feels
Compunction in his conscience for't: no matter,
So it be done. Marrall!
Mar. Sir.
Over. How succeed we
In our plot on Wellborn?
Mar. Never better, sir.
Over. Has he hang'd or drown'd himself?
Mar. No, sir, he lives;
Lives once more to be made a prey to you,
A greater prey than ever.
Over. Art thou in thy wits?
If thou art, reveal this miracle, and briefly.
Mar. A lady, sir, is fall'n in love with him.
Over. With him? What lady?
Mar. The rich Lady Allworth.
Over. Thou dolt! how dar'st thou speak this?
Mar. I speak truth;
And I do so but once a year, unless

It be to you, sir. We din'd with her ladyship,
I thank his worship.

Over. His worship!

Mar. As I live, sir,
I din'd with him, at the great lady's table,
Simple as I stand here; and saw when she kiss'd him,
And would, at his request, have kiss'd me too:
But I was not so audacious as some youths are,
That dare do anything, be it ne'er so absurd,
And sad after performance.

Over. Why, thou rascal!
To tell me these impossibilities.
Dine at her table! and kiss him! or thee! —
Impudent varlet, have not I myself,
To whom great countesses' doors have oft flew open,
Ten times attempted, since her husband's death,
In vain, to see her, though I came — a suitor?
And yet your good solicitorship, and rogue Wellborn,
Were brought into her presence, feasted with her! —
But that I know thee a dog that cannot blush,
This most incredible lie would call up one
On thy buttermilk cheeks.

Mar. Shall I not trust my eyes, sir,
Or taste? I feel her good cheer in my belly.

Over. You shall feel me, if you give not over, sirrah:
Recover your brains again, and be no more gull'd
With a beggar's plot, assisted by the aids
Of serving-men and chambermaids, for beyond these
Thou never saw'st a woman, or I'll quit you
From my employments.

Mar. Will you credit this yet?
On my confidence of their marriage, I offer'd Wellborn ——
(*Aside.*) I would give a crown now I durst say "his worship" ——
My nag and twenty pounds.

Over. Did you so, idiot!
(*Strikes him down.*)
Was this the way to work him to despair,
Or rather to cross me?

Mar. Will your worship kill me?

Over. No, no; but drive the lying spirit out of you.

Mar. He's gone.

Over. I have done then: now, forgetting
Your late imaginary feast and lady,
Know, my Lord Lovell dines with me to-morrow.
Be careful nought be wanting to receive him;
And bid my daughter's women trim her up,
Though they paint her, so she catch the lord, I'll thank them.
There's a piece for my late blows.

Mar. (*aside*). I must yet suffer:
But there may be a time ——

Over. Do you grumble?

Mar. No, sir. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

Scene I.

([*Enter* Lord] Lovell, Allworth, *and Servants.*)

Lov. Walk the horses down the hill: something in private
I must impart to Allworth.
(*Exeunt Servants.*)

All. O, my lord,
What a sacrifice of reverence, duty, watching,
Although I could put off the use of sleep,
And ever wait on your commands to serve 'em;
What dangers, though in ne'er so horrid shapes,
Nay death itself, though I should run to meet it,
Can I, and with a thankful willingness, suffer!
But still the retribution will fall short
Of your bounties shower'd upon me.

Lov. Loving youth,
Till what I purpose be put into act,
Do not o'erprize it; since you have trusted me

With your soul's nearest, nay, her dearest secret,
Rest confident 'tis in a cabinet lock'd
Treachery shall never open. I have found you
(For so much to your face I must profess,
Howe'er you guard your modesty with a blush for't)
More zealous in your love and service to me
Than I have been in my rewards.
ALL. Still great ones,
Above my merit.
LOV. Such your gratitude calls 'em;
Nor am I of that harsh and rugged temper
As some great men are tax'd with, who imagine
They part from the respect due to their honours
If they use not all such as follow 'em,
Without distinction of their births, like slaves.
I am not so condition'd; I can make
A fitting difference between my footboy
And a gentleman by want compell'd to serve me.
ALL. 'Tis thankfully acknowledg'd: you have been
More like a father to me than a master.
Pray you, pardon the comparison.
LOV. I allow it:
And, to give you assurance I am pleas'd in't,
My carriage and demeanour to your mistress,
Fair Margaret, shall truly witness for me
I can command my passions.
ALL. 'Tis a conquest
Few lords can boast of when they are tempted — Oh!
LOV. Why do you sigh? Can you be doubtful of me?
By that fair name I in the wars have purchas'd,
And all my actions, hitherto untainted,
I will not be more true to mine own honour
Than to my Allworth!
ALL. As you are the brave Lord Lovell,
Your bare word only given is an assurance
Of more validity and weight to me
Than all the oaths, bound up with imprecations,
Which, when they would deceive, most courtiers practise;
Yet being a man, (for, sure, to style you more
Would relish of gross flattery,) I am forc'd,
Against my confidence of your worth and virtues,
To doubt, nay, more, to fear.
LOV. So young, and jealous!
ALL. Were you to encounter with a single foe,
The victory were certain; but to stand
The charge of two such potent enemies,
At once assaulting you, as wealth and beauty,
And those too seconded with power, is odds
Too great for Hercules.
LOV. Speak your doubts and fears,
Since you will nourish 'em, in plainer language,
That I may understand them.
ALL. What's your will,
Though I lend arms against myself, (provided
They may advantage you,) must be obeyed.
My much-lov'd lord, were Margaret only fair,
The cannon of her more than earthly form,
Though mounted high, commanding all beneath it,
And ramm'd with bullets of her sparkling eyes,
Of all the bulwarks that defend your senses
Could batter none, but that which guards your sight.
But when the well-tun'd accents of her tongue
Make music to you, and with numerous sounds
Assault your hearing, (such as if Ulysses
Now liv'd again, howe'er he stood the Syrens,
Could not resist,) the combat must grow doubtful
Between your reason and rebellious passions.
Add this too; when you feel her touch, and breath
Like a soft western wind when it glides o'er
Arabia, creating gums and spices;
And, in the van, the nectar of her lips,

Which you must taste, bring the battalia on,
Well arm'd, and strongly lin'd with her discourse,
And knowing manners, to give entertainment; —
Hippolytus himself would leave Diana,
To follow such a Venus.
Lov. Love hath made you
Poetical, Allworth.
All. Grant all these beat off,
Which if it be in man to do, you'll do it,
Mammon, in Sir Giles Overreach, steps in
With heaps of ill-got gold, and so much land,
To make her more remarkable, as would tire
A falcon's wings in one day to fly over.
O my good lord! these powerful aids, which would
Make a mis-shapen negro beautiful,
(Yet are but ornaments to give her lustre,
That in herself is all perfection,) must
Prevail for her, I here release your trust;
'Tis happiness enough for me to serve you
And sometimes, with chaste eyes, to look upon her.
Lov. Why, shall I swear?
All. O, by no means, my lord;
And wrong not so your judgment to the world
As from your fond indulgence to a boy,
Your page, your servant, to refuse a blessing
Divers great men are rivals for.
Lov. Suspend
Your judgment till the trial. How far is it
To Overreach's house?
All. At the most, some half hour's riding;
You'll soon be there.
Lov. And you the sooner freed
From your jealous fears.
All. O that I durst but hope it!
(*Exeunt.*)

Scene II.

([*Enter*] Overreach, Greedy, *and* Marrall.)

Over. Spare for no cost; let my dressers crack with the weight
Of curious viands.
Greedy. "Store indeed's no sore," sir.
Over. That proverb fits your stomach, Master Greedy.
And let no plate be seen but what's pure gold,
Or such whose workmanship exceeds the matter
That it is made of; let my choicest linen
Perfume the room, and, when we wash, the water,
With precious powders mix'd, so please my lord
That he may with envy wish to bathe so ever.
Mar. 'Twill be very chargeable.
Over. Avaunt, you drudge!
Now all my labour'd ends are at the stake,
Is't a time to think of thrift? Call in my daughter. [*Exit* Marrall.]
And, Master Justice, since you love choice dishes,
And plenty of 'em ——
Greedy. As I do, indeed, sir,
Almost as much as to give thanks for 'em.
Over. I do confer that providence, with my power
Of absolute command to have abundance,
To your best care.
Greedy. I'll punctually discharge it,
And give the best directions. Now am I,
In mine own conceit, a monarch; at the least,
Arch-president of the boil'd, the roast, the bak'd;
For which I will eat often, and give thanks
When my belly's brac'd up like a drum, and that's pure justice. (*Exit.*)
Over. It must be so. Should the foolish girl prove modest,
She may spoil all; she had it not from me,
But from her mother; I was ever forward,
As she must be, and therefore I'll prepare her.

([*Enter*] Margaret.)

Alone — and let your women wait without.
Marg. Your pleasure, sir?
Over. Ha! this is a neat dressing!
These orient pearls and diamonds well plac'd too!

The gown affects me not, it should have been
Embroider'd o'er and o'er with flowers of gold;
But these rich jewels and quaint fashion help it.
And how below? since oft the wanton eye
The face observ'd, descends unto the foot,
Which being well proportion'd, as yours is,
Invites as much as perfect white and red,
Though without art. How like you your new woman,
The Lady Downfall'n?
Marg. Well, for a companion;
Not as a servant.
Over. Is she humble, Meg,
And careful too, her ladyship forgotten?
Marg. I pity her fortune.
Over. Pity her! trample on her.
I took her up in an old tamin gown,
(Even starv'd for want of twopenny chops,) to serve thee;
And if I understand she but repines
To do thee any duty, though ne'er so servile,
I'll pack her to her knight, where I have lodg'd him,
Into the Counter and there let 'em howl together.
Marg. You know your own ways; but for me, I blush
When I command her, that was once attended
With persons not inferior to myself
In birth.
Over. In birth! why, art thou not my daughter,
The blest child of my industry and wealth?
Why, foolish girl, was't not to make thee great
That I have run, and still pursue, those ways
That hale down curses on me, which I mind not?
Part with these humble thoughts, and apt thyself
To the noble state I labour to advance thee;
Or, by my hopes to see thee honourable,
I will adopt a stranger to my heir,
And throw thee from my care. Do not provoke me.
Marg. I will not, sir; mould me which way you please.

(*Re-enter* Greedy.)

Over. How! Interrupted!
Greedy. 'Tis matter of importance.
The cook, sir, is self-will'd, and will not learn
From my experience. There's a fawn brought in, sir,
And, for my life, I cannot make him roast it
With a Norfolk dumpling in the belly of it;
And, sir, we wise men know, without the dumpling
'Tis not worth three-pence.
Over. Would it were whole in thy belly,
To stuff it out! Cook it any way; prithee, leave me.
Greedy. Without order for the dumpling?
Over. Let it be dumpl'd
Which way thou wilt; or tell him, I will scald him
In his own caldron.
Greedy. I had lost my stomach
Had I lost my mistress dumpling; I'll give thanks for't. [*Exit.*]
Over. But to our business, Meg; you have heard who dines here?
Marg. I have, sir.
Over. 'Tis an honourable man;
A lord, Meg, and commands a regiment
Of soldiers, and, what's rare, is one himself,
A bold and understanding one; and to be
A lord and a good leader, in one volume,
Is granted unto few but such as rise up
The kingdom's glory.

(*Re-enter* Greedy.)

Greedy. I'll resign my office,
If I be not better obey'd.
Over. 'Slight, art thou frantic?
Greedy. Frantic! 'Twould make me frantic and stark mad,
Were I not a justice of peace and quorum too,
Which this rebellious cook cares not a straw for.
There are a dozen of woodcocks ——
Over. Make thyself
Thirteen, the baker's dozen.
Greedy. I am contented,

So they may be dress'd to my mind; he has found out
A new device for sauce, and will not dish 'em
With toasts and butter. My father was a tailor,
And my name, though a justice, Greedy Woodcock;
And, ere I'll see my lineage so abus'd,
I'll give up my commission.
Over. [*loudly*]. Cook! — Rogue, obey him!
I have given the word, pray you now remove yourself
To a collar of brawn, and trouble me no further.
Greedy. I will, and meditate what to eat at dinner. (*Exit.*)
Over. And as I said, Meg, when this gull disturb'd us,
This honourable lord, this colonel,
I would have thy husband.
Marg. There's too much disparity
Between his quality and mine, to hope it.
Over. I more than hope't, and doubt not to effect it.
Be thou no enemy to thyself, my wealth
Shall weight his titles down, and make you equals.
Now for the means to assure him thine, observe me:
Remember he's a courtier and a soldier,
And not to be trifled with; and, therefore, when
He comes to woo you, see you do not coy it:
This mincing modesty has spoil'd many a match
By a first refusal, in vain after hop'd for.
Marg. You'll have me, sir, preserve the distance that
Confines a virgin?
Over. Virgin me no virgins!
I must have you lose that name, or you lose me.
I will have you private — start not — I say, private;
If thou art my true daughter, not a bastard,
Thou wilt venture alone with one man, though he came
Like Jupiter to Semele, and come off, too;
And therefore, when he kisses you, kiss close.
Marg. I have heard this is the strumpet's fashion, sir,
Which I must never learn.
Over. Learn any thing,
And from any creature that may make thee great;
From the devil himself.
Marg. [*aside*]. This is but devilish doctrine!
Over. Or, if his blood grow hot, suppose he offer
Beyond this, do not you stay till it cool,
But meet his ardour; if a couch be near,
Sit down on't, and invite him.
Marg. In your house,
Your own house, sir! For Heaven's sake, what are you then?
Or what shall I be, sir?
Over. Stand not on form;
Words are no substances.
Marg. Though you could dispense
With your own honour, cast aside religion,
The hopes of Heaven, or fear of hell, excuse me,
In worldly policy this is not the way
To make me his wife; his whore, I grant it may do.
My maiden honour so soon yielded up,
Nay, prostituted, cannot but assure him
I, that am light to him, will not hold weight
Whene'er tempted by others; so, in judgment,
When to his lust I have given up my honour,
He must and will forsake me.
Over. How! forsake thee!
Do I wear a sword for fashion? or is this arm
Shrunk up or wither'd? Does there live a man
Of that large list I have encounter'd with
Can truly say I e'er gave inch of ground
Not purchas'd with his blood that did oppose me?
Forsake thee when the thing is done! He dares not.
Give me but proof he has enjoy'd thy person,
Though all his captains, echoes to his will,
Stood arm'd by his side to justify the wrong,

And he himself in the head of his bold troop,
Spite of his lordship, and his colonelship,
Or the judge's favour, I will make him render
A bloody and a strict account, and force him,
By marrying thee, to cure thy wounded honour!
I have said it.

(*Re-enter* MARRALL.)

MAR. Sir, the man of honour's come,
Newly alighted.
OVER. In, without reply.
And do as I command, or thou art lost.
(*Exit* MARGARET.)
Is the loud music I gave order for
Ready to receive him?
MAR. 'Tis, sir.
OVER. Let 'em sound
A princely welcome. (*Exit* MARRALL.)
Roughness awhile leave me;
For fawning now, a stranger to my nature,
Must make way for me.

(*Loud music. Enter* LORD LOVELL, GREEDY, ALLWORTH, *and* MARRALL.)

LOV. Sir, you meet your trouble.
OVER. What you are pleas'd to style so is an honour
Above my worth and fortunes.
ALL. [*aside*]. Strange, so humble.
OVER. A justice of peace, my lord.
(*Presents* GREEDY *to him.*)
LOV. Your hand, good sir.
GREEDY [*aside*]. This is a lord, and some think this a favour;
But I had rather have my hand in my dumpling.
OVER. Room for my lord.
LOV. I miss, sir, your fair daughter
To crown my welcome.
OVER. May it please my lord
To taste a glass of Greek wine first, and suddenly
She shall attend my lord.
LOV. You'll be obey'd, sir.
(*Exeunt all but* OVERREACH.)
OVER. 'Tis to my wish: as soon as come, ask for her!
Why, Meg! Meg Overreach. —

[*Re-enter* MARGARET.]

How! tears in your eyes!
Hah! dry 'em quickly, or I'll dig 'em out.
Is this a time to whimper? Meet that greatness
That flies into thy bosom, think what 'tis
For me to say, "My honourable daughter;"
And thou, when I stand bare, to say, "Put on;"
Or, "Father, you forget yourself." No more:
But be instructed, or expect —— He comes.

(*Re-enter* LORD LOVELL, GREEDY, ALLWORTH, *and* MARRALL.)

A black-brow'd girl, my lord.
LOV. As I live, a rare one.
(*They salute.*)
ALL. [*aside*]. He's took already: I am lost.
OVER. [*aside*]. That kiss.
Came twanging off, I like it. — Quit the room.
[*Exeunt all but* OVERREACH, LOVELL, *and* MARGARET.]
A little bashful, my good lord, but you,
I hope, will teach her boldness.
LOV. I am happy
In such a scholar: but ——
OVER. I am past learning,
And therefore leave you to yourselves.— Remember!
(*Aside to* MARGARET *and exit.*)
LOV. You see, fair lady, your father is solicitous
To have you change the barren name of virgin
Into a hopeful wife.
MARG. His haste, my lord,
Holds no power o'er my will.
LOV. But o'er your duty.
MARG. Which forc'd too much, may break.
LOV. Bend rather, sweetest:
Think of your years.
MARG. Too few to match with yours:
And choicest fruits too soon pluck'd, rot and wither.
LOV. Do you think I am old?
MARG. I am sure I am too young.

Lov. I can advance you.
Marg. To a hill of sorrow,
Where every hour I may expect to fall,
But never hope firm footing. You are noble,
I of a low descent, however rich;
And tissues match'd with scarlet suit but ill.
O, my good lord, I could say more, but that
I dare not trust these walls.
Lov. Pray you, trust my ear then.

(*Re-enter* Overreach [*behind*], *listening.*)

Over. Close at it! whispering! this is excellent!
And, by their postures, a consent on both parts.

(*Re-enter* Greedy *behind.*)

Greedy. Sir Giles, Sir Giles!
Over. The great fiend stop that clapper!
Greedy. It must ring out, sir, when my belly rings noon.
The bak'd-meats are run out, the roasts turn'd powder.
Over. I shall powder you.
Greedy. Beat me to dust, I care not;
In such a cause as this, I'll die a martyr.
Over. Marry, and shall, you barathrum of the shambles! (*Strikes him.*)
Greedy. How! strike a justice of peace! 'Tis petty treason,
Edwardi quinto: but that you are my friend,
I would commit you without bail or mainprize.
Over. Leave your bawling, sir, or I shall commit you
Where you shall not dine to-day. Disturb my lord,
When he is in discourse!
Greedy. Is't a time to talk
When we should be munching!
Lov. Hah! I heard some noise.
Over. Mum, villain; vanish! Shall we break a bargain
Almost made up? (*Thrusts* Greedy *off.*)
Lov. Lady, I understand you.
And rest most happy in your choice, believe it;
I'll be a careful pilot to direct
Your yet uncertain bark to a port of safety.
Marg. So shall your honour save two lives, and bind us
Your slaves for ever.
Lov. I am in the act rewarded,
Since it is good; howe'er, you must put on
An amorous carriage towards me to delude
Your subtle father.
Marg. I am prone to that.
Lov. Now break we off our conference. — Sir Giles!
Where is Sir Giles?
[Overreach *comes forward.*]

(*Re-enter* Allworth, Marrall, *and* Greedy.)

Over. My noble lord; and how
Does your lordship find her?
Lov. Apt, Sir Giles, and coming;
And I like her the better.
Over. So do I too.
Love. Yet should we take forts at the first assault,
'Twere poor in the defendant; I must confirm her
With a love-letter or two, which I must have
Deliver'd by my page, and you give way to't.
Over. With all my soul: — a towardly gentleman!
Your hand, good Master Allworth: know my house
Is ever open to you.
All. (*aside*). 'Twas shut till now.
Over. Well done, well done, my honourable daughter!
Thou'rt so already. Know this gentle youth,
And cherish him, my honourable daughter.
Marg. I shall, with my best care.
(*Noise within, as of a coach.*)
Over. A coach!
Greedy. More stops
Before we go to dinner! O my guts!

(*Enter* Lady Allworth *and* Wellborn.)

L. All. If I find welcome,
You share in it; if not, I'll back again,
Now I know your ends; for I come arm'd for all
Can be objected.

LOV. How! the Lady Allworth!
OVER. And thus attended!
(LOVELL *salutes* LADY ALLWORTH, LADY ALLWORTH *salutes* MARGARET.)
MAR. No, "I am a dolt!
The spirit of lies had ent'red me!"
OVER. Peace, Patch;
'Tis more than wonder! an astonishment
That does possess me wholly!
LOV. Noble lady,
This is a favour, to prevent my visit,
The service of my life can never equal.
L. ALL. My lord, I laid wait for you, and much hop'd
You would have made my poor house your first inn:
And therefore doubting that you might forget me,
Or too long dwell here, having such ample cause,
In this unequall'd beauty, for your stay,
And fearing to trust any but myself
With the relation of my service to you,
I borrow'd so much from my long restraint
And took the air in person to invite you.
LOV. Your bounties are so great, they rob me, madam,
Of words to give you thanks.
L. ALL. Good Sir Giles Overreach.
(*Salutes him.*)
— How dost thou, Marrall? Lik'd you my meat so ill,
You'll dine no more with me?
GREEDY. I will, when you please,
An it like your ladyship.
L. ALL. When you please, Master Greedy;
If meat can do it, you shall be satisfied.
And now, my lord, pray take into your knowledge
This gentleman; howe'er his outside's coarse, (*Presents* WELLBORN.)
His inward linings are as fine and fair
As any man's; wonder not I speak at large:
And howsoe'er his humour carries him
To be thus accoutred, or what taint soever,
For his wild life, hath stuck upon his fame,
He may ere long, with boldness, rank himself
With some that have contemn'd him. Sir Giles Overreach,
If I am welcome, bid him so.
OVER. My nephew!
He has been too long a stranger. Faith you have,
Pray let it be mended.
(LOVELL *confers aside with* WELLBORN.)
MAR. Why, sir, what do you mean?
This is "rogue Wellborn, monster, prodigy,
That should hang or drown himself;" no man of worship,
Much less your nephew.
OVER. Well, sirrah, we shall reckon
For this hereafter.
MAR. I'll not lose my jeer,
Though I be beaten dead for't.
WELL. Let my silence plead
In my excuse, my lord, till better leisure
Offer itself to hear a full relation
Of my poor fortunes.
LOV. I would hear, and help 'em.
OVER. Your dinner waits you.
LOV. Pray you lead, we follow.
L. ALL. Nay, you are my guest; come, dear Master Wellborn.
(*Exeunt all but* GREEDY.)
GREEDY. "Dear Master Wellborn!" so she said: Heaven! Heaven!
If my belly would give me leave, I could ruminate
All day on this. I have granted twenty warrants
To have him committed, from all prisons in the shire,
To Nottingham gaol; and now "Dear Master Wellborn!"
And, "My good nephew!" — but I play the fool
To stand here prating, and forget my dinner.

(*Re-enter* MARRALL.)

Are they set, Marrall?
MAR. Long since; pray you a word, sir.
GREEDY. No wording now.
MAR. In troth, I must. My master,
Knowing you are his good friend, makes bold with you,
And does entreat you, more guests being come in
Than he expected, especially his nephew,

The table being full too, you would excuse him,
And sup with him on the cold meat.
GREEDY. How! No dinner,
After all my care?
MAR. 'Tis but a penance for
A meal; besides, you broke your fast.
GREEDY. That was
But a bit to stay my stomach. A man in commission
Give place to a tatterdemalion!
MAR. No bug words, sir;
Should his worship hear you ——
GREEDY. Lose my dumpling too,
And butter'd toasts, and woodcocks!
MAR. Come, have patience.
If you will dispense a little with your worship,
And sit with the waiting women, you'll have dumpling,
Woodcock, and butter'd toasts too.
GREEDY. This revives me:
I will gorge there sufficiently.
MAR. This is the way, sir. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene III.

([*Enter*] OVERREACH, *as from dinner.*)

OVER. She's caught! O women! — she neglects my lord,
And all her compliments appli'd to Wellborn!
The garments of her widowhood laid by,
She now appears as glorious as the spring,
Her eyes fix'd on him, in the wine she drinks,
He being her pledge, she sends him burning kisses,
And sits on thorns, till she be private with him.
She leaves my meat to feed upon his looks,
And if in our discourse he be but nam'd,
From her a deep sigh follows. And why grieve I
At this? It makes for me; if she prove his,
All that is hers is mine, as I will work him.

(*Enter* MARRALL.)

MAR. Sir, the whole board is troubled at your rising.
OVER. No matter, I'll excuse it. Prithee, Marrall,
Watch an occasion to invite my nephew
To speak with me in private.
MAR. Who? "The rogue
The lady scorn'd to look on"?
OVER. You are a wag.

(*Enter* LADY ALLWORTH *and* WELLBORN.)

MAR. See, sir, she's come, and cannot be without him.
L. ALL. With your favour, sir, after a plenteous dinner,
I shall make bold to walk a turn or two,
In your rare garden.
OVER. There's an arbour too,
If your ladyship please to use it.
L. ALL. Come, Master Wellborn.
(*Exeunt* LADY ALLWORTH *and* WELLBORN.)
OVER. Grosser and grosser! Now I believe the poet
Feign'd not, but was historical, when he wrote
Pasiphae was enamour'd of a bull:
This lady's lust's more monstrous. — My good lord,

(*Enter* LORD LOVELL, MARGARET, *and the rest.*)

Excuse my manners.
LOV. There needs none, Sir Giles,
I may ere long say father, when it pleases
My dearest mistress to give warrant to it.
OVER. She shall seal to it, my lord, and make me happy.

(*Re-enter* WELLBORN *and* LADY ALLWORTH.)

MARG. My lady is return'd.
L. ALL. Provide my coach,
I'll instantly away. My thanks, Sir Giles,
For my entertainment.
OVER. 'Tis your nobleness
To think it such.
L. ALL. I must do you a further wrong
In taking away your honourable guest.
LOV. I wait on you, madam; farewell, good Sir Giles.
L. ALL. Good Mistress Margaret! Nay, come, Master Wellborn,
I must not leave you behind; in sooth, I must not.
OVER. Rob me not, madam, of all joys at once;

Let my nephew stay behind. He shall have my coach,
And, after some small conference between us,
Soon overtake your ladyship.
L. All. Stay not long, sir.
Lov. This parting kiss: [*kisses* Margaret] you shall every day hear from me,
By my faithful page.
All. 'Tis a service I am proud of.
[*Exeunt* Lord Lovell, Lady Allworth, Allworth, *and* Marrall.]
Over. Daughter, to your chamber. — (*Exit* Margaret.)
— You may wonder, nephew,
After so long an enmity between us,
I should desire your friendship.
Well. So I do, sir;
'Tis strange to me.
Over. But I'll make it no wonder;
And what is more, unfold my nature to you.
We worldly men, when we see friends and kinsmen
Past hopes sunk in their fortunes, lend no hand
To lift 'em up, but rather set our feet
Upon their heads, to press 'em to the bottom;
As, I must yield, with you I practis'd it:
But, now I see you in a way to rise,
I can and will assist you. This rich lady
(And I am glad of't) is enamour'd of you;
'Tis too apparent, nephew.
Well. No such thing:
Compassion rather, sir.
Over. Well, in a word,
Because your stay is short, I'll have you seen
No more in this base shape; nor shall she say
She married you like a beggar, or in debt.
Well. (*aside*). He'll run into the noose, and save my labour.
Over. You have a trunk of rich clothes, not far hence,
In pawn; I will redeem 'em; and that no clamour
May taint your credit for your petty debts,
You shall have a thousand pounds to cut 'em off,
And go a free man to the wealthy lady.
Well. This done, sir, out of love, and no ends else ——
Over. As it is, nephew.
Well. Binds me still your servant.
Over. No compliments; you are staid for. Ere you have supp'd
You shall hear from me. My coach, knaves, for my nephew.
To-morrow I will visit you.
Well. Here's an uncle
In a man's extremes! How much they do belie you,
That say you are hard-hearted!
Over. My deeds, nephew,
Shall speak my love; what men report I weigh not. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

Scene I.

([*Enter* Lord] Lovell *and* Allworth.)

Lov. 'Tis well; give me my cloak; I now discharge you
From further service. Mind your own affairs;
I hope they will prove successful.
All. What is blest
With your good wish, my lord, cannot but prosper.
Let aftertimes report, and to your honour,
How much I stand engag'd, for I want language
To speak my debt; yet if a tear or two
Of joy, for your much goodness, can supply
My tongue's defects, I could ——
Lov. Nay, do not melt:
This ceremonial thanks to me's superfluous.
Over. (*within*). Is my lord stirring?
Lov. 'Tis he! oh, here's your letter. Let him in.

(*Enter* Overreach, Greedy, *and* Marrall.)

Over. A good day to my lord!
Lov. You are an early riser,
Sir Giles.
Over. And reason, to attend your lordship.

Lov. And you, too, Master Greedy, up so soon!
Greedy. In troth, my lord, after the sun is up,
I cannot sleep, for I have a foolish stomach
That croaks for breakfast. With your lordship's favour,
I have a serious question to demand
Of my worthy friend Sir Giles.
Lov. Pray you use your pleasure.
Greedy. How far, Sir Giles, and pray you answer me
Upon your credit, hold you it to be
From your manor-house, to this of my Lady Allworth's?
Over. Why, some four mile.
Greedy. How! four mile, good Sir Giles ——
Upon your reputation, think better;
For if you do abate but one half-quarter
Of five, you do yourself the greatest wrong
That can be in the world; for four miles riding
Could not have rais'd so huge an appetite
As I feel gnawing on me.
Mar. Whether you ride,
Or go afoot, you are that way still provided,
An it please your worship.
Over. How now, sirrah? Prating
Before my lord! No difference? Go to my nephew,
See all his debts discharg'd, and help his worship
To fit on his rich suit.
Mar. [*aside*]. I may fit you too.
Toss'd like a dog still! (*Exit.*)
Lov. I have writ this morning
A few lines to my mistress, your fair daughter.
Over. 'Twill fire her, for she's wholly yours already. —
Sweet Master Allworth, take my ring; 'twill carry you
To her presence, I dare warrant you; and there plead
For my good lord, if you shall find occasion.
That done, pray ride to Nottingham, get a licence,
Still by this token. I'll have it dispatch'd,
And suddenly, my lord, that I may say,
My honourable, nay, right honourable daughter.
Greedy. Take my advice, young gentleman, get your breakfast;
'Tis unwholesome to ride fasting. I'll eat with you,
And eat to purpose.
Over. Some Fury's in that gut;
Hungry again! Did you not devour, this morning,
A shield of brawn, and a barrel of Colchester oysters?
Greedy. Why, that was, sir, only to scour my stomach,
A kind of a preparative. Come, gentleman,
I will not have you feed like the hangman of Flushing,
Alone, while I am here.
Lov. Haste your return.
All. I will not fail, my lord.
Greedy. Nor I, to line
My Christmas coffer.
(*Exeunt* Greedy *and* Allworth.)
Over. To my wish: we are private.
I come not to make offer with my daughter
A certain portion, — that were poor and trivial:
In one word, I pronounce all that is mine,
In lands or leases, ready coin or goods,
With her, my lord, comes to you; nor shall you have
One motive to induce you to believe
I live too long, since every year I'll add
Something unto the heap, which shall be yours too.
Lov. You are a right kind father.
Over. You shall have reason
To think me such. How do you like this seat?
It is well wooded, and well water'd, the acres
Fertile and rich; would it not serve for change,
To entertain your friends in a summer progress?
What thinks my noble lord?
Lov. 'Tis a wholesome air,
And well-built pile; and she that's mistress of it,
Worthy the large revénue.
Over. She the mistress!
It may be so for a time: but let my lord
Say only that he likes it, and would have it,

I say, ere long 'tis his.
Lov. Impossible.
Over. You do conclude too fast, not knowing me,
Nor the engines that I work by. 'Tis not alone
The Lady Allworth's lands, for those once Wellborn's
(As by her dotage on him I know they will be,)
Shall soon be mine; but point out any man's
In all the shire, and say they lie convenient
And useful for your lordship, and once more
I say aloud, they are yours.
Lov. I dare not own
What's by unjust and cruel means extorted;
My fame and credit are more dear to me,
Than so to expose 'em to be censur'd by
The public voice.
Over. You run, my lord, no hazard.
Your reputation shall stand as fair,
In all good men's opinions, as now;
Nor can my actions, though condemn'd for ill,
Cast any foul aspersion upon yours.
For, though I do contemn report myself
As a mere sound, I still will be so tender
Of what concerns you, in all points of honour,
That the immaculate whiteness of your fame,
Nor your unquestioned integrity,
Shall e'er be sullied with one taint or spot
That may take from your innocence and candour.
All my ambition is to have my daughter
Right honourable, which my lord can make her:
And might I live to dance upon my knee
A young Lord Lovell, borne by her unto you,
I write *nil ultra* to my proudest hopes.
As for possessions and annual rents,
Equivalent to maintain you in the port
Your noble birth and present state requires,
I do remove that burthen from your shoulders,
And take it on mine own: for, though I ruin
The country to supply your riotous waste,
The scourge of prodigals, want, shall never find you.
Lov. Are you not frighted with the imprecations
And curses of whole families, made wretched
By your sinister practices?
Over. Yes, as rocks are,
When foamy billows split themselves against
Their flinty ribs; or as the moon is mov'd
When wolves, with hunger pin'd, howl at her brightness.
I am of a solid temper, and, like these,
Steer on a constant course. With mine own sword,
If call'd into the field, I can make that right,
Which fearful enemies murmur'd at as wrong.
Now, for these other piddling complaints
Breath'd out in bitterness; as when they call me
Extortioner, tyrant, cormorant, or intruder
On my poor neighbour's right, or grand incloser
Of what was common, to my private use;
Nay, when my ears are pierc'd with widows' cries,
And undone orphans wash with tears my threshold,
I only think what 'tis to have my daughter
Right honourable; and 'tis a powerful charm
Makes me insensible of remorse, or pity,
Or the least sting of conscience.
Lov. I admire
The toughness of your nature.
Over. 'Tis for you,
My lord, and for my daughter, I am marble;
Nay more, if you will have my character
In little, I enjoy more true delight
In my arrival to my wealth these dark
And crooked ways, than you shall e'er take pleasure
In spending what my industry hath compass'd.
My haste commands me hence; in one word, therefore,
Is it a match?
Lov. I hope, that is past doubt now.
Over. Then rest secure; not the hate of all mankind here,

Nor fear of what can fall on me hereafter,
Shall make me study aught but your advancement
One story higher: an earl! if gold can do it.
Dispute not my religion, nor my faith;
Though I am borne thus headlong by my will,
You may make choice of what belief you please,
To me they are equal; so, my lord, good morrow. (*Exit.*)
Lov. He's gone — I wonder how the earth can bear
Such a portent! I, that have liv'd a soldier,
And stood the enemy's violent charge undaunted,
To hear this blasphemous beast am bath'd all over
In a cold sweat: yet, like a mountain, he
(Confirm'd in atheistical assertions)
Is no more shaken than Olympus is
When angry Boreas loads his double head
With sudden drifts of snow.

(*Enter* LADY ALLWORTH, *Waiting Woman, and* AMBLE.)

L. ALL. Save you, my lord!
Disturb I not your privacy?
LOV. No, good madam;
For your own sake I am glad you came no sooner,
Since this bold bad man, Sir Giles Overreach,
Made such a plain discovery of himself,
And read this morning such a devilish matins,
That I should think it a sin next to his
But to repeat it.
L. ALL. I ne'er press'd, my lord,
On others' privacies; yet, against my will,
Walking, for health' sake, in the gallery
Adjoining to your lodgings, I was made
(So vehement and loud he was) partaker
Of his tempting offers.
LOV. Please you to command
Your servants hence, and I shall gladly hear
Your wiser counsel.
L. ALL. 'Tis, my lord, a woman's,
But true and hearty; — wait in the next room,
But be within call; yet not so near to force me
To whisper my intents.
AMB. We are taught better
By you, good madam.
W. WOM. And well know our distance.
L. ALL. Do so, and talk not; 'twill become your breeding.
(*Exeunt* AMBLE *and W. Woman.*)
Now, my good lord; if I may use my freedom,
As to an honour'd friend ——
LOV. You lessen else
Your favour to me.
L. ALL. I dare then say thus:
As you are noble (howe'er common men
Make sordid wealth the object and sole end
Of their industrious aims) 'twill not agree
With those of eminent blood, who are engag'd
More to prefer their honours than to increase
The state left to 'em by their ancestors,
To study large additions to their fortunes,
And quite neglect their births: — though I must grant,
Riches, well got, to be a useful servant,
But a bad master.
LOV. Madam, 'tis confessed;
But what infer you from it?
L. ALL. This, my lord;
That as all wrongs, though thrust into one scale,
Slide of themselves off when right fills the other
And cannot bide the trial; so all wealth,
I mean if ill-acquir'd, cemented to honour
By virtuous ways achiev'd, and bravely purchas'd,
Is but as rubbish pour'd into a river,
(Howe'er intended to make good the bank,)
Rendering the water, that was pure before,
Polluted and unwholesome. I allow
The heir of Sir Giles Overreach, Margaret,
A maid well qualified and the richest match
Our north part can make boast of; yet she cannot,
With all that she brings with her, fill their mouths,
That never will forget who was her father;
Or that my husband Allworth's lands, and Wellborn's,

(How wrung from both needs now no repetition,)
Were real motives that more work'd your lordship
To join your families, than her form and virtues:
You may conceive the rest.
Lov. I do, sweet madam,
And long since have consider'd it. I know,
The sum of all that makes a just man happy
Consists in the well choosing of his wife:
And there, well to discharge it, does require
Equality of years, of birth, of fortune;
For beauty being poor, and not cried up
By birth or wealth, can truly mix with neither.
And wealth, where there's such difference in years,
And fair descent, must make the yoke uneasy: —
But I come nearer.
L. All. Pray you do, my lord.
Lov. Were Overreach's states thrice centupl'd, his daughter
Millions of degrees much fairer than she is,
Howe'er I might urge precedents to excuse me,
I would not so adulterate my blood
By marrying Margaret, and so leave my issue
Made up of several pieces, one part scarlet,
And the other London blue. In my own tomb
I will inter my name first.
L. All. (*aside*). I am glad to hear this. ——
Why then, my lord, pretend you marriage to her?
Dissimulation but ties false knots
On that straight line by which you, hitherto,
Have measur'd all your actions.
Lov. I make answer,
And aptly, with a question. Wherefore have you,
That, since your husband's death, have liv'd a strict
And chaste nun's life, on the sudden given yourself
To visits and entertainments? Think you, madam,
'Tis not grown public conference? Or the favours
Which you too prodigally have thrown on Wellborn,
Being too reserv'd before, incur not censure?
L. All. I am innocent here; and, on my life, I swear
My ends are good.
Lov. On my soul, so are mine
To Margaret; but leave both to the event:
And since this friendly privacy does serve
But as an offer'd means unto ourselves,
To search each other farther, you having shewn
Your care of me, I my respect to you,
Deny me not, but still in chaste words, madam,
An afternoon's discourse.
L. All. So I shall hear you. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene II.

([*Enter*] Tapwell *and* Froth.)

Tap. Undone, undone! this was your counsel, Froth.
Froth. Mine! I defy thee. Did not Master Marrall
(He has marr'd all, I am sure) strictly command us,
On pain of Sir Giles Overreach' displeasure,
To turn the gentleman out of doors?
Tap. 'Tis true;
But now he's his uncle's darling, and has got
Master Justice Greedy, since he fill'd his belly,
At his commandment, to do anything.
Woe, woe to us!
Froth. He may prove merciful.
Tap. Troth, we do not deserve it at his hands.
Though he knew all the passages of our house,
As the receiving of stolen goods, and bawdry,
When he was rogue Wellborn no man would believe him,
And then his information could not hurt us;
But now he is right worshipful again,
Who dares but doubt his testimony? Methinks,

I see thee, Froth, already in a cart,
For a close bawd, thine eyes ev'n pelted out
With dirt and rotten eggs; and my hand hissing
If I scape the halter, with the letter R
Printed upon it.
Froth. Would that were the worst!
That were but nine days' wonder: as for credit,
We have none to lose, but we shall lose the money
He owes us, and his custom; there's the hell on't.
Tap. He has summon'd all his creditors by the drum,
And they swarm about him like so many soldiers
On the pay day: and has found out such A NEW WAY
To PAY HIS OLD DEBTS, as 'tis very likely
He shall be chronicled for it!
Froth. He deserves it
More than ten pageants. But are you sure his worship
Comes this way, to my lady's?
(*A cry within:*) Brave Master Wellborn!
Tap. Yes: — I hear him.
Froth. Be ready with your petition and present it
To his good grace.

(*Enter* Wellborn *in a rich habit,* [Marrall,] Greedy, Order, Furnace, *and* Creditors; Tapwell *kneeling, delivers his bill of debt.*)

Well. How's this? Petition'd to?
But note what miracles the payment of
A little trash, and a rich suit of clothes,
Can work upon these rascals! I shall be,
I think, Prince Wellborn.
Mar. When your worship's married,
You may be — I know what I hope to see you.
Well. Then look thou for advancement.
Mar. To be known
Your worship's bailiff, is the mark I shoot at.
Well. And thou shalt hit it.
Mar. Pray you, sir, despatch
These needy followers, and for my admittance,
Provided you'll defend me from Sir Giles,
Whose service I am weary of, I'll say something
You shall give thanks for.
Well. Fear me not Sir Giles.
Greedy. Who, Tapwell? I remember thy wife brought me
Last new-year's tide, a couple of fat turkeys.
Tap. And shall do every Christmas, let your worship
But stand my friend now.
Greedy. How! with Master Wellborn?
I can do anything with him on such terms. —
See you this honest couple; they are good souls
As ever drew out faucet; have they not
A pair of honest faces?
Well. I o'erheard you,
And the bribe he promis'd. You are cozen'd in them;
For, by all the scum that grew rich by my riots,
This, for a most unthankful knave, and this,
For a base bawd and whore, have worst deserv'd me,
And therefore speak not for 'em. By your place
You are rather to do me justice. Lend me your ear;
— Forget his turkeys, and call in his license,
And, at the next fair, I'll give you a yoke of oxen
Worth all his poultry.
Greedy. I am chang'd on the sudden
In my opinion! Come near; nearer, rascal.
And, now I view him better, did you e'er see
One look so like an archknave? His very countenance,
Should an understanding judge but look upon him,
Would hang him, though he were innocent.
Tap. Froth. Worshipful sir.
Greedy. No, though the great Turk came, instead of turkeys,
To beg my favour, I am inexorable.
Thou hast an ill name: besides thy musty ale,
That hath destroy'd many of the king's liege people,

Thou never hadst in thy house, to stay men's stomachs,
A piece of Suffolk cheese or gammon of bacon,
Or any esculent, as the learned call it,
For their emolument, but sheer drink only,
For which gross fault I here do damn thy license,
Forbidding thee ever to tap or draw;
For, instantly, I will, in mine own person,
Command the constable to pull down thy sign,
And do it before I eat.
Froth. No mercy?
Greedy. Vanish!
If I shew any, may my promis'd oxen gore me!
Tap. Unthankful knaves are ever so rewarded.
(*Exeunt* Greedy, Tapwell, *and* Froth.)
Well. Speak, what are you?
1 Cred. A decay'd vintner, sir,
That might have thriv'd, but that your worship broke me
With trusting you with muscadine and eggs,
And five pound suppers, with your after drinkings,
When you lodg'd upon the Bankside.
Well. I remember.
1 Cred. I have not been hasty, nor e'er laid to arrest you;
And therefore, sir ——
Well. Thou art an honest fellow,
I'll set thee up again; see his bill paid. —
What are you?
2 Cred. A tailor once, but now mere botcher.
I gave you credit for a suit of clothes,
Which was all my stock, but you failing in payment,
I was remov'd from the shopboard, and confin'd
Under a stall.
Well. See him paid; — and botch no more.
2 Cred. I ask no interest, sir.
Well. Such tailors need not;
If their bills are paid in one and twenty year,
They are seldom losers. — O, I know thy face, [*To Creditor.*]
Thou wert my surgeon. You must tell no tales;
Those days are done. I will pay you in private.
Ord. A royal gentleman!
Furn. Royal as an emperor!
He'll prove a brave master; my good lady knew
To choose a man.
Well. See all men else discharg'd;
And since old debts are clear'd by a new way,
A little bounty will not misbecome me;
There's something, honest cook, for thy good breakfasts;
And this, for your respect: [*to* Order] take't, 'tis good gold,
And I able to spare it.
Ord. You are too munificent.
Furn. He was ever so.
Well. Pray you, on before.
3 Cred. Heaven bless you!
Mar. At four o'clock; the rest know where to meet me.
(*Exeunt* Order, Furnace, *and Creditors.*)
Well. Now, Master Marrall, what's the weighty secret
You promis'd to impart?
Mar. Sir, time nor place
Allow me to relate each circumstance;
This only, in a word: I know Sir Giles
Will come upon you for security
For his thousand pounds, which you must not consent to.
As he grows in heat, as I am sure he will,
Be you but rough, and say he's in your debt
Ten times the sum, upon sale of your land;
I had a hand in't (I speak it to my shame)
When you were defeated of it.
Well. That's forgiven.
Mar. I shall deserve't. Then urge him to produce
The deed in which you pass'd it over to him,
Which I know he'll have about him, to deliver
To the Lord Lovell, with many other writings,

And present monies; I'll instruct you further,
As I wait on your worship. If I play not my prize
To your full content, and your uncle's much vexation,
Hang up, Jack Marrall.
Well. I rely upon thee. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene III.

(*Enter* Allworth *and* Margaret.)

All. Whether to yield the first praise to my lord's
Unequall'd temperance or your constant sweetness
That I yet live, my weak hands fasten'd on
Hope's anchor, spite of all storms of despair,
I yet rest doubtful.
Marg. Give it to Lord Lovell:
For what in him was bounty, in me's duty.
I make but payment of a debt to which
My vows, in that high office regist'red,
Are faithful witnesses.
All. 'Tis true, my dearest:
Yet, when I call to mind how many fair ones
Make wilful shipwrecks of their faiths, and oaths
To God and man, to fill the arms of greatness,
And you rise up [no] less than a glorious star,
To the amazement of the world, — hold out
Against the stern authority of a father,
And spurn at honour when it comes to court you;
I am so tender of your good, that faintly,
With your wrong, I can wish myself that right
You yet are pleas'd to do me.
Marg. Yet, and ever.
To me what's title, when content is wanting?
Or wealth, rak'd up together with much care,
And to be kept with more, when the heart pines
In being dispossess'd of what it longs for
Beyond the Indian mines? or the smooth brow
Of a pleas'd sire, that slaves me to his will,
And, so his ravenous humour may be feasted
By my obedience, and he see me great,
Leaves to my soul nor faculties nor power
To make her own election?
All. But the dangers
That follow the repulse ——
Marg. To me they are nothing;
Let Allworth love, I cannot be unhappy.
Suppose the worst, that, in his rage, he kill me,
A tear or two, by you dropt on my hearse
In sorrow for my fate, will call back life
So far as but to say, that I die yours;
I then shall rest in peace: or should he prove
So cruel, as one death would not suffice
His thirst of vengeance, but with ling'ring torments
In mind and body I must waste to air,
In poverty join'd with banishment; so you share
In my afflictions, which I dare not wish you,
So high I prize you, I could undergo 'em
With such a patience as should look down
With scorn on his worst malice.
All. Heaven avert
Such trials of your true affection to me!
Nor will it unto you, that are all mercy,
Shew so much rigour: but since we must run
Such desperate hazards, let us do our best
To steer between them.
Marg. Your lord's ours, and sure:
And, though but a young actor, second me
In doing to the life what he has plotted.

(*Enter* Overreach [*behind*].)

The end may yet prove happy. Now, my Allworth — [*Seeing her father.*]
All. To your letter, and put on a seeming anger.
Marg. I'll pay my lord all debts due to his title;
And when with terms, not taking from his honour,
He does solicit me, I shall gladly hear him.

But in this peremptory, nay, commanding way,
To appoint a meeting, and without my knowledge,
A priest to tie the knot can ne'er be undone
Till death unloose it, is a confidence
In his lordship will deceive him.
All. I hope better,
Good lady.
Marg. Hope, sir, what you please: for me
I must take a safe and secure course; I have
A father, and without his full consent,
Though all lords of the land kneel'd for my favor,
I can grant nothing.
Over. I like this obedience: [*Comes forward.*]
But whatso'er my lord writes, must and shall be
Accepted and embrac'd. Sweet Master Allworth,
You shew yourself a true and faithful servant
To your good lord; he has a jewel of you.
How! frowning, Meg? Are these looks to receive
A messenger from my lord? What's this? Give me it.
Marg. A piece of arrogant paper, like th' inscriptions.
Over. (*reads*). "Fair mistress, from your servant learn all joys
That we can hope for, if deferr'd, prove toys;
Therefore this instant, and in private, meet
A husband, that will gladly at your feet
Lay down his honours, tend'ring them to you
With all content, the church being paid her due."
— Is this the arrogant piece of paper? Fool!
Will you still be one? In the name of madness what
Could his good honour write more to content you?
Is there aught else to be wish'd, after these two,
That are already offer'd; marriage first,
And lawful pleasure after: what would you more?
Marg. Why, sir, I would be married like your daughter;
Not hurried away i' th' night I know not whither,
Without all ceremony; no friends invited
To honour the solemnity.
All. An't please your honour,
For so before to-morrow I must style you,
My lord desires this privacy, in respect
His honourable kinsmen are afar off,
And his desires to have it done brook not
So long delay as to expect their coming;
And yet he stands resolv'd, with all due pomp,
As running at the ring, plays, masques, and tilting,
To have his marriage at court celebrated,
When he has brought your honour up to London.
Over. He tells you true; 'tis the fashion, on my knowledge:
Yet the good lord, to please your peevishness,
Must put it off, forsooth! and lose a night,
In which perhaps he might get two boys on thee.
Tempt me no further, if you do, this goad [*Points to his sword.*]
Shall prick you to him.
Marg. I could be contented,
Were you but by, to do a father's part,
And give me in the church.
Over. So my lord have you,
What do I care who gives you? Since my lord
Does purpose to be private, I'll not cross him.
I know not, Master Allworth, how my lord
May be provided, and therefore there's a purse
Of gold, 'twill serve this night's expense: to-morrow
I'll furnish him with any sums. In the mean time,
Use my ring to my chaplain; he is benefic'd

At my manor of Gotham, and call'd Parson Willdo.
'Tis no matter for a licence, I'll bear him out in't.

Marg. With your favour, sir, what warrant is your ring?
He may suppose I got that twenty ways,
Without your knowledge; and then to be refus'd
Were such a stain upon me! — If you pleas'd, sir,
Your presence would do better.

Over. Still perverse!
I say again, I will not cross my lord;
Yet I'll prevent you too. — Paper and ink, there!

All. I can furnish you.

Over. I thank you, I can write then. (*Writes on his book.*)

All. You may, if you please, put out the name of my lord,
In respect he comes disguis'd, and only write,
"Marry her to this gentleman."

Over. Well advis'd.
'Tis done; away; — (Margaret *kneels.*) My blessing, girl? Thou hast it.
Nay, no reply, be gone. — Good Master Allworth,
This shall be the best night's work you ever made.

All. I hope so, sir.
(*Exeunt* Allworth *and* Margaret.)

Over. Farewell! — Now all's cocksure:
Methinks I hear already knights and ladies
Say, Sir Giles Overreach, how is it with
Your honourable daughter? Has her honour
Slept well to-night? or, will her honour please
To accept this monkey, dog, or paraquit
(This is state in ladies), or my eldest son
To be her page, and wait upon her trencher?
My ends, my ends are compass'd! — then for Wellborn
And the lands: were he once married to the widow,
I have him here. — I can scarce contain myself,
I am so full of joy, nay, joy all over. (*Exit.*)

ACT V.

Scene I.

([*Enter* Lord] Lovell, Lady Allworth, *and* Amble.)

L. All. By this you know how strong the motives were
That did, my lord, induce me to dispense
A little with my gravity to advance,
In personating some few favours to him,
The plots and projects of the down-trod Wellborn.
Nor shall I e'er repent, although I suffer
In some few men's opinions for't, the action:
For he that ventur'd all for my dear husband
Might justly claim an obligation from me
To pay him such a courtesy; which had I
Coyly or over-curiously denied,
It might have argu'd me of little love
To the deceas'd.

Lov. What you intended, madam,
For the poor gentleman hath found good success;
For, as I understand, his debts are paid,
And he once more furnish'd for fair employment:
But all the arts that I have us'd to raise
The fortunes of your joy and mine, young Allworth,
Stand yet in supposition, though I hope well;
For the young lovers are in wit more pregnant
Than their years can promise; and for their desires,
On my knowledge, they are equal.

L. All. As my wishes
Are with yours, my lord; yet give me leave to fear
The building, though well grounded: to deceive
Sir Giles, that's both a lion and a fox
In his proceedings, were a work beyond
The strongest undertakers; not the trial
Of two weak innocents.

Lov. Despair not, madam:
Hard things are compass'd oft by easy means;

And judgment, being a gift deriv'd from Heaven,
Though sometimes lodg'd i' th' hearts of worldly men,
That ne'er consider from whom they receive it,
Forsakes such as abuse the giver of it.
Which is the reason that the politic
And cunning statesman, that believes he fathoms
The counsels of all kingdoms on the earth,
Is by simplicity oft over-reach'd.
L. All. May he be so! Yet, in his name to express it,
Is a good omen.
Lov. May it to myself
Prove so, good lady, in my suit to you!
What think you of the motion?
L. All. Troth, my lord,
My own unworthiness may answer for me;
For had you, when that I was in my prime,
My virgin flower uncropp'd, presented me
With this great favour; looking on my lowness
Not in a glass of self-love, but of truth,
I could not but have thought it as a blessing
Far, far beyond my merit.
Lov. You are too modest,
And undervalue that which is above
My title, or whatever I call mine.
I grant, were I a Spaniard, to marry
A widow might disparage me; but being
A true-born Englishman, I cannot find
How it can taint my honour: nay, what's more,
That which you think a blemish is to me
The fairest lustre. You already, madam,
Have given sure proofs how dearly you can cherish
A husband that deserves you; which confirms me
That, if I am not wanting in my care
To do you service, you'll be still the same
That you were to your Allworth: in a word,
Our years, our states, our births are not unequal,
You being descended nobly, and alli'd so;
If then you may be won to make me happy,
But join your lips to mine, and that shall be
A solemn contract.
L. All. I were blind to my own good
Should I refuse it; [*kisses him*] yet, my lord, receive me
As such a one, the study of whose whole life
Shall know no other object but to please you.
Lov. If I return not, with all tenderness,
Equal respect to you, may I die wretched!
L. All. There needs no protestation, my lord,
To her that cannot doubt, —

(*Enter* Wellborn [*handsomely apparelled*].)

You are welcome, sir.
Now you look like yourself.
Well. And will continue
Such in my free acknowledgment that I am
Your creature, madam, and will never hold
My life mine own, when you please to command it.
Lov. It is a thankfulness that well becomes you.
You could not make choice of a better shape
To dress your mind in.
L. All. For me, I am happy
That my endeavours prosper'd. Saw you of late
Sir Giles, your uncle?
Well. I heard of him, madam,
By his minister, Marrall; he's grown into strange passions
About his daughter. This last night he look'd for
Your lordship at his house, but missing you,
And she not yet appearing, his wise head
Is much perplex'd and troubl'd.
Lov. It may be,
Sweetheart, my project took.
L. All. I strongly hope.
Over. [*within*]. Ha! find her, booby, thou huge lump of nothing,
I'll bore thine eyes out else.
Well. May it please your lordship,
For some ends of mine own, but to withdraw
A little out of sight, though not of hearing,

You may, perhaps, have sport.
Lov. You shall direct me.
(*Steps aside.*)

(*Enter* Overreach, *with distracted looks, driving in* Marrall *before him* [*with a box*].)

Over. I shall *sol fa* you, rogue!
Mar. Sir, for what cause
Do you use me thus?
Over. Cause, slave! Why, I am angry,
And thou a subject only fit for beating,
And so to cool my choler. Look to the writing;
Let but the seal be broke upon the box
That hast slept in my cabinet these three years,
I'll rack thy soul for't.
Mar. (*aside*). I may yet cry quittance,
Though now I suffer, and dare not resist.
Over. Lady, by your leave, did you see my daughter lady?
And the lord her husband? Are they in your house?
If they are, discover, that I may bid 'em joy;
And, as an entrance to her place of honour,
See your ladyship be on her left hand, and make courtesies
When she nods on you; which you must receive
As a special favour.
L. All. When I know, Sir Giles,
Her state requires such ceremony, I shall pay it;
But in the meantime, as I am myself,
I give you to understand, I neither know
Nor care where her honour is.
Over. When you once see her.
Supported, and led by the lord her husband,
You'll be taught better. — Nephew.
Well. Sir.
Over. No more?
Well. 'Tis all I owe you.
Over. Have your redeem'd rags
Made you thus insolent?
Well. (*in scorn*). Insolent to you!
Why, what are you, sir, unless in your years,
At the best, more than myself?
Over. [*aside*]. His fortune swells him.
'Tis rank he's married.
L. All. This is excellent!
Over. Sir, in calm language, though I seldom use it,
I am familiar with the cause that makes you
Bear up thus bravely; there's a certain buzz
Of a stol'n marriage, do you hear? of a stol'n marriage,
In which, 'tis said, there's somebody hath been cozen'd;
I name no parties.
Well. Well, sir, and what follows?
Over. Marry, this; since you are peremptory. Remember,
Upon mere hope of your great match, I lent you
A thousand pounds: put me in good security,
And suddenly, by mortgage or by statute,
Of some of your new possessions, or I'll have you
Dragg'd in your lavender robes to the gaol. You know me,
And therefore do not trifle.
Well. Can you be
So cruel to your nephew, now he's in
The way to rise? Was this the courtesy
You did me "in pure love, and no ends else?"
Over. End me no ends! Engage the whole estate,
And force your spouse to sign it, you shall have
Three or four thousand more, to roar and swagger
And revel in bawdy taverns.
Well. And beg after;
Mean you not so?
Over. My thoughts are mine, and free.
Shall I have security?
Well. No, indeed, you shall not,
Nor bond, nor bill, nor bare acknowledgment;
Your great looks fright not me.
Over. But my deeds shall.
Outbrav'd! (*Both draw.*)
L. All. Help, murder! murder!

(*Enter Servants.*)

Well. Let him come on,
With all his wrongs and injuries about him,

Arm'd with his cut-throat practices to guard him;
The right that I bring with me will defend me,
And punish his extortion.
Over. That I had thee
But single in the field!
L. All. You may; but make not
My house your quarrelling scene.
Over. Were't in a church,
By Heaven and Hell, I'll do't!
Mar. [*aside to* Wellborn]. Now put him to
The shewing of the deed.
Well. This rage is vain, sir;
For fighting, fear not, you shall have your hands full,
Upon the least incitement; and whereas
You charge me with a debt of a thousand pounds,
If there be law, (howe'er you have no conscience,)
Either restore my land or I'll recover
A debt, that's truly due to me from you,
In value ten times more than what you challenge.
Over. I in thy debt! O impudence! did I not purchase
The land left by thy father, that rich land,
That had continued in Wellborn's name
Twenty descents; which, like a riotous fool,
Thou didst make sale of it? Is not here inclos'd
The deed that does confirm it mine?
Mar. Now, now!
Well. I do acknowledge none; I ne'er pass'd o'er
Any such land. I grant for a year or two
You had it in trust; which if you do discharge,
Surrend'ring the possession, you shall ease
Yourself and me of chargeable suits in law,
Which, if you prove not honest, as I doubt it,
Must of necessity follow.
L. All. In my judgment,
He does advise you well.
Over. Good! good! Conspire
With your new husband, lady; second him
In his dishonest practices; but when
This manor is extended to my use,
You'll speak in humbler key, and sue for favour.
L. All. Never: do not hope it.
Well. Let despair first seize me.
Over. Yet, to shut up thy mouth, and make thee give
Thyself the lie, the loud lie, I draw out
The precious evidence; if thou canst forswear
Thy hand and seal, and make a forfeit of
(*Opens the box* [*and displays the bond*].)
Thy ears to the pillory, see! here's that will make
My interest clear — ha!
L. All. A fair skin of parchment.
Well. Indented, I confess, and labels too;
But neither wax nor words. How! thunder-struck?
Not a syllable to insult with? My wise uncle,
Is this your precious evidence? Is this that makes
Your interest clear?
Over. I am o'erwhelm'd with wonder!
What prodigy is this? What subtle devil
Hath raz'd out the inscription, the wax
Turn'd into dust? The rest of my deeds whole
As when they were deliver'd, and this only
Made nothing! Do you deal with witches, rascal?
There is a statute for you, which will bring
Your neck in an hempen circle; yes, there is;
And now 'tis better thought for, cheater, know
This juggling shall not save you.
Well. To save thee
Would beggar the stock of mercy.
Over. Marrall!
Mar. Sir.
Over. (*flattering him*). Though the witnesses are dead, your testimony
Help with an oath or two: and for thy master,
Thy liberal master, my good honest servant,
I know thou wilt swear anything, to dash
This cunning sleight: besides, I know thou art

A public notary, and such stand in law
For a dozen witnesses: the deed being drawn too
By thee, my careful Marrall, and deliver'd
When thou wert present, will make good my title.
Wilt thou not swear this?
MAR. I! No, I assure you:
I have a conscience not sear'd up like yours;
I know no deeds.
OVER. Wilt thou betray me?
MAR. Keep him
From using of his hands, I'll use my tongue,
To his no little torment.
OVER. Mine own varlet
Rebel against me!
MAR. Yes, and uncase you too.
"The idiot, the patch, the slave, the booby,
The property fit only to be beaten
For your morning exercise," your "foot-ball," or
"Th' unprofitable lump of flesh," your "drudge,"
Can now anatomise you, and lay open
All your black plots, and level with the earth
Your hill of pride, and, with these gabions guarded
Unload my great artillery, and shake,
Nay pulverize, the walls you think defend you.
L. ALL. How he foams at the mouth with rage!
WELL. To him again.
OVER. O that I had thee in my gripe, I would tear thee
Joint after joint!
MAR. I know you are a tearer,
But I'll have first your fangs par'd off, and then
Come nearer to you; when I have discover'd,
And made it good before the judge, what ways
And devilish practices you us'd to cozen
With an army of whole families, who yet live,
And, but enroll'd for soldiers, were able
To take in Dunkirk.
WELL. All will come out.
L. ALL. The better.
OVER. But that I will live, rogue, to torture thee,
And make thee wish, and kneel in vain, to die,
These swords that keep thee from me should fix here,
Although they made my body but one wound,
But I would reach thee.
LOV. (*aside*). Heaven's hand is in this;
One bandog worry the other!
OVER. I play the fool,
And make my anger but ridiculous;
There will be a time and place, there will be, cowards,
When you shall feel what I dare do.
WELL. I think so:
You dare do any ill, yet want true valour
To be honest, and repent.
OVER. They are words I know not,
Nor e'er will learn. Patience, the beggar's virtue,

(*Enter* GREEDY *and* PARSON WILLDO.)

Shall find no harbour here: — after these storms
At length a calm appears. Welcome, most welcome!
There's comfort in thy looks. Is the deed done?
Is my daughter married? Say but so, my chaplain,
And I am tame.
WILLDO. Married! Yes I assure you.
OVER. Then vanish all sad thoughts! There's more gold for thee.
My doubts and fears are in the titles drown'd
Of my honourable, my right honourable daughter.
GREEDY. Here will be feasting! At least for a month
I am provided: empty guts, croak no more.
You shall be stuff'd like bagpipes, not with wind,
But bearing dishes.
OVER. Instantly be here?
(*Whispering to* WILLDO.)
To my wish! to my wish! Now you that plot against me,
And hop'd to trip my heels up, that contemn'd me,

Think on't and tremble. — (*Loud music*) —
They come! I hear the music.
A lane there for my lord!
Well. This sudden heat
May yet be cool'd, sir.
Over. Make way there for my lord!

(*Enter* Allworth *and* Margaret.)

Marg. Sir, first your pardon, then your blessing, with
Your full allowance of the choice I have made.
As ever you could make use of your reason, (*Kneeling.*)
Grow not in passion; since you may as well
Call back the day that's past, as untie the knot
Which is too strongly fasten'd. Not to dwell
Too long on words, this is my husband.
Over. How!
All. So I assure you; all the rites of marriage,
With every circumstance, are past. Alas! sir,
Although I am no lord, but a lord's page,
Your daughter and my lov'd wife mourns not for it;
And, for right honourable son-in-law, you may say,
Your dutiful daughter.
Over. Devil! are they married?
Willdo. Do a father's part, and say, "Heaven give 'em joy!"
Over. Confusion and ruin! Speak, and speak quickly,
Or thou art dead.
Willdo. They are married.
Over. Thou hadst better
Have made a contract with the king of fiends,
Than these: — my brain turns!
Willdo. Why this rage to me?
Is not this your letter, sir, and these the words?
"Marry her to this gentleman."
Over. It cannot —
Nor will I e'er believe it; 'sdeath! I will not;
That I, that in all passages I touch'd
At worldly profit have not left a print
Where I have trod for the most curious search
To trace my footsteps, should be gull'd by children,
Baffl'd and fool'd, and all my hopes and labours
Defeated and made void.
Well. As it appears,
You are so, my grave uncle.
Over. Village nurses
Revenge their wrongs with curses; I'll not waste
A syllable, but thus I take the life
Which, wretched, I gave to thee.
(*Offers to kill* Margaret.)
Lov. [*coming forward*]. Hold, for your own sake!
Though charity to your daughter hath quite left you,
Will you do an act, though in your hopes lost here,
Can leave no hope for peace or rest hereafter?
Consider; at the best you are but a man,
And cannot so create your aims but that
They may be cross'd.
Over. Lord! thus I spit at thee,
And at thy counsel; and again desire thee,
And as thou art a soldier, if thy valour
Dares shew itself where multitude and example
Lead not the way, let's quit the house, and change
Six words in private.
Lov. I am ready.
L. All. Stay, sir,
Contest with one distracted!
Well. You'll grow like him,
Should you answer his vain challenge.
Over. Are you pale?
Borrow his help, though Hercules call it odds,
I'll stand against both as I am, hemm'd in thus.
Since, like a Libyan lion in the toil,
My fury cannot reach the coward hunters,
And only spends itself, I'll quit the place.
Alone I can do nothing; but I have servants
And friends to second me; and if I make not
This house a heap of ashes (by my wrongs,
What I have spoke I will make good!) or leave
One throat uncut, — if it be possible,
Hell, add to my afflictions! (*Exit.*)

Mar. Is't not brave sport?
Greedy. Brave sport! I am sure it has ta'en away my stomach;
I do not like the sauce.
All. Nay, weep not, dearest,
Though it express your pity; what's decreed
Above, we cannot alter.
L. All. His threats move me
No scruple, madam.
Mar. Was it not a rare trick,
An it please your worship, to make the deed nothing?
I can do twenty neater, if you please
To purchase and grow rich; for I will be
Such a solicitor and steward for you,
As never worshipful had.
Well. I do believe thee;
But first discover the quaint means you us'd
To raze out the conveyance?
Mar. They are mysteries
Not to be spoke in public: certain minerals
Incorporated in the ink and wax —
Besides, he gave me nothing, but still fed me
With hopes and blows; but that was the inducement
To this conundrum. If it please your worship
To call to memory, this mad beast once caus'd me
To urge you or to drown or hang yourself;
I'll do the like to him, if you command me.
Well. You are a rascal! He that dares be false
To a master, though unjust, will ne'er be true
To any other. Look not for reward
Or favour from me; I will shun thy sight
As I would do a basilisk's. Thank my pity
If thou keep thy ears; howe'er, I will take order
Your practice shall be silenc'd.
Greedy. I'll commit him,
If you'll have me, sir.
Well. That were to little purpose;
His conscience be his prison. Not a word,
But instantly be gone.
Ord. Take this kick with you.
Amb. And this.
Furn. If that I had my cleaver here
I would divide your knave's head.
Mar. This is the haven
False servants still arrive at. (*Exit.*)

(*Re-enter* Overreach.)

L. All. Come again!
Lov. Fear not, I am your guard.
Well. His looks are ghastly.
Willdo. Some little time I have spent, under your favours,
In physical studies, and if my judgment err not,
He's mad beyond recovery: but observe him,
And look to yourselves.
Over. Why, is not the whole world
Included in myself? To what use then
Are friends and servants? Say there were a squadron
Of pikes, lin'd through with shot, when I am mounted
Upon my injuries, shall I fear to charge 'em?
No: I'll through the battalia, and, that routed,
(*Flourishing his sword sheathed.*)
I'll fall to execution — Ha! I am feeble:
Some undone widow sits upon mine arm,
And takes away the use of't; and my sword,
Glu'd to my scabbard with wrong'd orphans' tears,
Will not be drawn. Ha! what are these? Sure, hangmen
That come to bind my hands, and then to drag me
Before the judgment-seat: now they are new shapes,
And do appear like Furies, with steel whips
To scourge my ulcerous soul. Shall I then fall
Ingloriously, and yield? No; spite of Fate,
I will be forc'd to hell like to myself.
Though you were legions of accursed spirits,
Thus would I fly among you.
[*Rushes forward and flings himself on the ground.*]
Well. There's no help;
Disarm him first, then bind him.
Greedy. Take a *mittimus*.
And carry him to Bedlam.
Lov. How he foams!
Well. And bites the earth!

Willdo. Carry him to some dark room,
There try what art can do for his recovery.
Marg. O my dear father!
(*They force* Overreach *off*.)
All. You must be patient, mistress.
Lov. Here is a precedent to teach wicked men
That when they leave religion, and turn atheists,
Their own abilities leave 'em. Pray you take comfort,
I will endeavour you shall be his guardians
In his distractions: and for your land, Master Wellborn,
Be it good or ill in law, I'll be an umpire
Between you, and this, th' undoubted heir
Of Sir Giles Overreach. For me, here's the anchor
That I must fix on.
All. What you shall determine,
My lord, I will allow of.
Well. 'Tis the language
That I speak too; but there is something else
Beside the repossession of my land,
And payment of my debts, that I must practise.
I had a reputation, but 'twas lost
In my loose course, and until I redeem it
Some noble way, I am but half made up.
It is a time of action; if your lordship
Will please to confer a company upon me
In your command, I doubt not in my service
To my king and country but I shall do something
That may make me right again.
Lov. Your suit is granted
And you lov'd for the motion.
Well. [*coming forward*]. Nothing wants then
But your allowance —

THE EPILOGUE

But your allowance, and in that our all
Is comprehended; it being known, nor we,
Nor he that wrote the comedy, can be free
Without your manumission; which if you
Grant willingly, as a fair favour due
To the poet's and our labours, (as you may,
For we despair not, gentlemen, of the play,)
We jointly shall profess your grace hath might
To teach us action, and him how to write.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE PLAIN DEALER

By WILLIAM WYCHERLEY

(1674)

Ridiculum acri
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res.
Horat.

THE PERSONS

Manly, of an honest, surly, nice humor, supposed first, in the time of the Dutch war, to have procured the command of a ship, out of honor, not interest; and choosing a sea-life only to avoid the world.

Freeman, Manly's Lieutenant, a gentleman well educated, but of a broken fortune, a complier with the age.

Vernish, Manly's bosom and only friend.

Novel, a pert railing Coxcomb, and an admirer of novelties, makes love to Olivia.

Major Oldfox, an old impertinent Fop, given to scribbling, makes love to the Widow Blackacre.

Lord Plausible, a ceremonious, supple, commending Coxcomb, in love with Olivia.

Jerry Blackacre, a true raw Squire, under age, and his mother's government, bred to the law.

Olivia, Manly's Mistress.

Fidelia, in love with Manly, and followed him to sea in man's clothes.

Eliza, Cousin to Olivia.

Lettice, Olivia's Woman.

Widow Blackacre, a petulant, litigious Widow, always in law, and Mother to Squire Jerry.

Lawyers, Knights of the Post, Bailiffs and Aldermen, a Bookseller's 'Prentice, a Foot-boy, Sailors, Waiters, and Attendants.

The Scene: London.

TO MY LADY B——

MADAM,

THOUGH I never had the honor to receive a favor from you, nay, or be known to you, I take the confidence of an author to write to you a *billet-doux* dedicatory; which is no new thing, for by most dedications it appears that authors, though they praise their patrons from top to toe, and seem to turn 'em inside out, know 'em as little as sometimes their patrons their books, though they read 'em out; and if the poetical daubers did not write the name of the man or woman on top of the picture, 'twere impossible to guess whose it were. But you, madam, without the help of a poet, have made yourself known and famous in the world; and, because you do not want it, are therefore most worthy of an epistle dedicatory. And this play claims naturally your protection, since it has lost its reputation with the ladies of stricter lives in the playhouse; and (you know) when men's endeavors are discountenanced and refused by the nice coy women of honor, they come to you, to you, the great and noble patroness of rejected and bashful men, of which number I profess myself to be one, though a poet, a dedicating poet, to you, I say, madam, who have as discerning a judgment, in what's obscene or not, as any quick-sighted civil person of 'em all, and can make as much of a double-meaning saying as the best of 'em; yet would not, as some do, make nonsense of a poet's jest, rather than not make it bawdy: by which they show, they as little value wit in a play as in a lover, provided they can bring t'other thing about. Their sense, indeed, lies all one way, and therefore are only for that in a poet which is moving, as they say. But what do they mean by that word "moving"? Well, I must not put 'em to the blush, since I find I can do't. In short, madam, you would not be one of those who ravish a poet's innocent words, and make 'em guilty of their own naughtiness (as 'tis termed) in spite of his teeth. Nay, nothing is secure from the power of their imaginations, no, not their husbands, whom they cuckold with themselves, by thinking of other men; and so make the lawful matrimonial embraces adultery, wrong husbands and poets in thought and word, to keep their own reputations. But your ladyship's justice, I know, would think a woman's arraigning and damning a poet for her own obscenity like her crying out a rape, and hanging a man for giving her pleasure, only that she might be thought not to consent to't; and so to vindicate her honor, forfeits her modesty. But you, madam, have too much modesty to pretend to't; though you have as much to say for your modesty as many a nicer she; for you never were seen at this play, no, not the first day; and 'tis no matter what people's lives have been, they are unquestionably modest who frequent not this play. For, as Mr. Bayes says of his, 'That it is the only touchstone of men's wit and understanding;' mine is, it seems, the only touchstone of women's virtue and modesty. But hold, that touchstone is equivocal, and, by the strength of a lady's imagination, may become something that is not civil; but your ladyship, I know, scorns to misapply a touchstone. And, madam, though you have not seen this play, I hope (like other nice ladies) you will the rather read it; yet, lest the chambermaid or page should not be trusted, and their indulgence could gain no further admittance for it than to their ladies' lobbies or outward rooms, take it into your care and protection; for, by your recommendation and procurement, it may have the honor to get into their closets; for what they renounce in public often entertains 'em there, with your help especially. In fine, madam, for these and many other reasons, you are the fittest patroness or judge of this play; for you show no partiality to this or that author; for from some many ladies will take a broad jest as cheerfully as from the watermen, and sit at some downright filthy plays (as they call 'em) as well satisfied, and as still, as a poet could wish 'em elsewhere; therefore it must be the doubtful obscenity of my play alone they take exceptions at, because it is too bashful for 'em: and, indeed, most women hate men for attempting to halves on their chastity; and bawdy, I find, like satire, should be home, not to have it taken notice of. But, now I mention satire, some there are who say, ' 'Tis the plain-dealing of the play, not the obscenity; 'tis taking off the ladies' masks, not offering at their petticoats, which offends 'em:' and generally they are not the handsomest, or most innocent, who are the most angry at their being discovered:

Nihil est audacius illis
Deprensis; iram atque animos a crimine sumunt.

Pardon, madam, the quotation, for a dedication can no more be without ends of Latin, than flattery; and 'tis no matter whom it is writ to; for an author can as easily (I hope) suppose people to have more understanding and languages than they have, as well as more virtues. But why, the devil! should any of the few modest and handsome be alarmed? — (for some there are who, as well as any, deserve those attributes, yet refrain not from seeing this play, nor think it any addition to their virtue to set up for it in a playhouse, lest there it should look too much like acting). But why, I say, should any at all of the truly virtuous be concerned, if those who are not so are distinguished from 'em? For by that mask of modesty which women wear promiscuously in public, they are all alike, and you can no more know a kept wench from a woman of honor by her looks than by her dress; for those who are of quality without honor (if any such there are) they have their quality to set off their false modesty, as well as their false jewels; and you must no more suspect their countenances for counterfeit than their pendants, though, as the plain dealer Montaigne says, *Els envoy leur conscience au bordel, et tiennent leur continence en règle:* but those who act as they look, ought not to be scandalized at the reprehension of others' faults, lest they tax themselves with 'em, and by too delicate and quick an apprehension not only make that obscene which I meant innocent, but that satire on all, which was intended only on those who deserved it. But, madam, I beg your pardon for this digression to civil women and ladies of honor, since you and I shall never be the better for 'em; for a comic poet and a lady of your profession make most of the other sort; and the stage and your houses, like our plantations, are propagated by the least nice women; and, as with the ministers of justice, the vices of the age are our best business. But now I mention public persons, I can no longer defer doing you the justice of a dedication, and telling you your own, who are, of all public-spirited people, the most necessary, most communicative, most generous, and hospitable. Your house has been the house of the people; your sleep still disturbed for the public; and when you arose, 'twas that others might lie down, and you waked that others might rest; the good you have done is unspeakable. How many young inexperienced heirs have you kept from rash, foolish marriages, and from being jilted for their lives by the worst sort of jilts, wives! How many unbewitched widowers' children have you preserved from the tyranny of stepmothers! How many old dotards from cuckoldage, and keeping other men's wenches and children! How many adulteries and unnatural sins have you prevented! In fine, you have been a constant scourge to the old lecher, and often a terror to the young: you have made concupiscence its own punishment, and extinguished lust with lust, like blowing up of houses to stop the fire.

> Nimirum propter continentiam, incontinentia
> Necessaria est, incendium ignibus exstinguitur.

There's Latin for you again, madam; I protest to you, as I am an author, I cannot help it; nay, I can hardly keep myself from quoting Aristotle and Horace, and talking to you of the rules of writing (like the French authors), to show you and my reader I understand 'em, in my epistle, lest neither of you should find it out by the play; and according to the rules of dedications, 'tis no matter whether you understand or no what I quote or say to you of writing; for an author can as easily make any one a judge or critic in an epistle, as a hero in his play. But, madam, that this may prove to the end a true epistle dedicatory, I'd have you know 'tis not without a design upon you, which is in the behalf of the fraternity of Parnassus, that songs and sonnets may go at your houses, and in your liberties, for guineas and half-guineas; and that wit, at least with you, as of old, may be the price of beauty, and so you will prove a true encourager of poetry; for love is a better help to it than wine; and poets, like painters, draw better after the life than by fancy. Nay, in justice, madam, I think a poet ought to be as free of your houses, as of the play-houses; since he contributes to the support of both, and is as necessary to such as you, as a ballad-singer to a pick-purse, in convening the cullies at the theatres, to be picked up and carried to supper and bed at your houses. And, madam, the reason of this motion of mine is, because poor poets can get no favor in the tiring-rooms, for they are no keepers, you know; and folly and money, the old enemies of wit, are even too hard for it on its own dunghill: and for other ladies, a poet can least go to the price of them. Besides, his wit, which ought to recommend him to 'em, is as much an obstruction to his love, as to his wealth or preferment; for most women now-a-days apprehend wit in a lover, as much as in a husband; they hate a man that knows 'em, they must have a blind easy fool, whom they can lead by the nose; and, as the Scythian women of old, must baffle a man, and put out his eyes, ere they will lie with him; and then too like thieves, when they have plundered and stripped a man, leave him. But if there should be one of an hundred of those ladies generous enough to give herself to a man that has more wit than money, (all things considered) he would think it cheaper coming to you for a mistress, though you made him pay his guinea; as a man in a journey (out of good husbandry) had better pay for what he has in an inn, than lie on free-cost at a gentleman's house.

In fine, madam, like a faithful dedicator, I hope I have done myself right in the first place; then you, and your profession, which in the wisest and most religious government of the world is honored with the public allowance; and in those that are thought the most uncivilized and barbarous is protected and supported by the ministers of justice; and of you, madam, I ought to say no more here, for your virtues deserve a poem rather than an epistle, or a volume entire to give the world your memoirs, or life at large; and which (upon the word of an author that has a mind to make an end of his dedication) I promise to do, when I write the annals of our British love, which shall be dedicated to the ladies concerned, if they will not think them something too obscene too; when your life, compared with many that are thought innocent, I doubt not, may vindicate you, and me, to the world, for the confidence I have taken in this address to you; which then may be thought neither impertinent nor immodest; and whatsoever your amorous misfortunes have been, none can charge you with that heinous, and worst of women's crimes, hypocrisy; nay, in spite of misfortunes or age, you are the same woman still; though most of your sex grow Magdalens at fifty, and as a solid French author has it,

Après le plaisir, vient la peine;
Après la peine, la vertu.

But sure an old sinner's continency is much like a gamester's forswearing play, when he had lost all his money; and modesty is a kind of a youthful dress, which, as it makes a young woman more amiable, makes an old one more nauseous: a bashful old woman is like an hopeful old man; and the affected chastity of antiquated beauties is rather a reproach than an honor to 'em, for it shows the men's virtue only, not theirs. But you, in fine, madam, are no more an hypocrite than I am when I praise you; therefore I doubt not will be thought (even by yours and the play's enemies, the nicest ladies) to be the fittest patroness for, Madam, Your ladyship's most obedient, faithful, humble servant, and

THE PLAIN DEALER

PROLOGUE

Spoken by The Plain Dealer

I the Plain Dealer am to act to-day,
And my rough part begins before the play.
First, you who scribble, yet hate all that write,
And keep each other company in spite,
As rivals in your common mistress, fame,
And with faint praises one another damn;
'Tis a good play, we know, you can't forgive,
But grudge yourselves the pleasure you receive:
Our scribbler therefore bluntly bid me say,
He would not have the wits pleased here to-day.
Next, you, the fine, loud gentlemen o' th' pit,
Who damn all plays, yet, if y'ave any wit,
'Tis but what here you spunge and daily get;
Poets, like friends to whom you are in debt,
You hate; and so rooks laugh, to see undone
Those pushing gamesters whom they live upon.
Well, you are sparks, and still will be i' th' fashion;
Rail then at plays, to hide your obligation.
Now, you shrewd judges, who the boxes sway,
Leading the ladies' hearts and sense astray,
And, for their sakes, see all, and hear no play;
Correct your cravats, foretops, lock behind;
The dress and breeding of the play ne'er mind;
Plain dealing is, you'll say, quite out of fashion;
You'll hate it here, as in a dedication;
And your fair neighbors, in a limning poet,
No more than in a painter will allow it.
Pictures too like the ladies will not please;
They must be drawn too here like goddesses.
You, as at Lely's too, would truncheon wield,
And look like heroes in a painted field;
But the coarse dauber of the coming scenes
To follow life and nature only means,
Displays you as you are, makes his fine woman
A mercenary jilt, and true to no man;
His men of wit and pleasure of the age
Are as dull rogues as ever cumber'd stage:
He draws a friend only to custom just,
And makes him naturally break his trust.
I, only, act a part like none of you,
And yet, you'll say, it is a fool's part too:
An honest man who, like you, never winks
At faults; but, unlike you, speaks what he thinks:
The only fool who ne'er found patron yet,
For truth is now a fault as well as wit.
And where else, but on stages, do we see
Truth pleasing, or rewarded honesty?
Which our bold poet does this day in me.
If not to th' honest, be to th' prosp'rous kind:
Some friends at court let the Plain Dealer find.

THE PLAIN DEALER

ACT I.

SCENE I. — CAPTAIN MANLY'S *Lodging.*

(*Enter* CAPTAIN MANLY, *surlily, and my* LORD PLAUSIBLE, *following him; and two Sailors behind.*)

MAN. Tell not me, my good Lord Plausible, of your decorums, supercilious forms, and slavish ceremonies! your little tricks, which you, the spaniels of the world, do daily over and over, for and to one another; not out of love or duty, but your servile fear.

L. PLAU. Nay, i' faith, i' faith, you are too passionate, and I must humbly beg your pardon and leave to tell you, they are the arts and rules the prudent of the world walk by.

MAN. Let 'em. But I'll have no leading-strings, I can walk alone; I hate a harness, and will not tug on in a faction, kissing my leader behind, that another slave may do the like to me.

L. PLAU. What, will you be singular then, like nobody? follow, love, and esteem nobody?

MAN. Rather than be general, like you, follow everybody, court and kiss everybody; though perhaps at the same time you hate everybody.

L. PLAU. Why, seriously, with your pardon, my dear friend —

MAN. With your pardon, my no friend, I will not, as you do, whisper my hatred or my scorn, call a man fool or knave by signs or mouths over his shoulder, whilst you have him in your arms; for such as you, like common whores and pickpockets, are only dangerous to those you embrace.

L. PLAU. Such as I! Heavens defend me! — upon my honor —

MAN. Upon your title, my lord, if you'd have me believe you.

L. PLAU. Well then, as I am a person of honor, I never attempted to abuse or lessen any person in my life.

MAN. What, you were afraid?

L. PLAU. No; but seriously, I hate to do a rude thing: no, faith, I speak well of all mankind.

MAN. I thought so: but know, that speaking well of all mankind is the worst kind of detraction; for it takes away the reputation of the few good men in the world, by making all alike. Now, I speak ill of most men, because they deserve it, — I that can do a rude thing, rather than an unjust thing.

L. PLAU. Well, tell not me, my dear friend, what people deserve; I ne'er mind that. I, like an author in a dedication, never speak well of a man for his sake, but my own; I will not disparage any man, to disparage myself; for to speak ill of people behind their backs, is not like a person of honor; and, truly, to speak ill of 'em to their faces, is not like a complaisant person. But if I did say or do an ill thing to any body, it should be sure to be behind their backs, out of pure good manners.

MAN. Very well; but I, that am an unmannerly sea-fellow, if I ever speak well of people, (which is very seldom indeed) it should be sure to be behind their backs; and if I would say or do ill to any, it should be to their faces. I would jostle a proud, strutting, overlooking coxcomb, at the head of his sycophants, rather than put out my tongue at him when he were past me; would frown in the arrogant, big, dull face of an overgrown knave of business, rather than vent my spleen against him when his back were turned; would give fawning slaves the lie whilst they embrace or commend me; cowards whilst they brag; call a rascal by no other title, though his father had left him a duke's;

laugh at fools aloud before their mistresses; and must desire people to leave me, when their visits grow at last as troublesome as they were at first impertinent.

L. Plau. I would not have my visits troublesome.

Man. The only way to be sure not to have 'em troublesome, is to make 'em when people are not at home; for your visits, like other good turns, are most obliging when made or done to a man in his absence. A pox! why should any one, because he has nothing to do, go and disturb another man's business?

L. Plau. I beg your pardon, my dear friend. What, you have business?

Man. If you have any, I would not detain your lordship.

L. Plau. Detain me, dear sir! I can never have enough of your company.

Man. I'm afraid I should be tiresome: I know not what you think.

L. Plau. Well, dear sir, I see you would have me gone.

Man. (*aside*). But I see you won't.

L. Plau. Your most faithful —

Man. God be w'ye, my lord.

L. Plau. Your most humble —

Man. Farewell.

L. Plau. And eternally —

Man. And eternally ceremony — (*Aside.*) Then the devil take thee eternally!

L. Plau. You shall use no ceremony, by my life.

Man. I do not intend it.

L. Plau. Why do you stir then?

Man. Only to see you out of doors, that I may shut 'em against more welcomes.

L. Plau. Nay, faith, that shan't pass upon your most faithful, humble servant.

Man. (*aside*). Nor this any more upon me.

L. Plau. Well, you are too strong for me.

Man. (*aside*). I'd sooner be visited by the plague; for that only would keep a man from visits, and his doors shut.

(*Exit, thrusting out* Lord Plausible.)

(*Manent Sailors.*)

1st Sail. Here's a finical fellow, Jack! What a brave fair-weather captain of a ship he would make!

2nd Sail. He a captain of a ship! it must be when she's in the dock then; for he looks like one of those that get the king's commissions for hulls to sell a king's ship, when a brave fellow has fought her almost to a longboat.

1st Sail. On my conscience then, Jack, that's the reason our bully tar sunk our ship: not only that the Dutch might not have her, but that the courtiers, who laugh at wooden legs, might not make her prize.

2nd Sail. A pox of his sinking, Tom! we have made a base, broken, short voyage of it.

1st Sail. Ay, your brisk dealers in honor always make quick returns with their ships to the dock, and their men to the hospitals. 'Tis, let me see, just a month since we set out of the river, and the wind was almost as cross to us as the Dutch.

2nd Sail. Well, I forgive him sinking my own poor truck, if he would but have given me time and leave to have saved black Kate of Wapping's small venture.

1st Sail. Faith, I forgive him, since, as the purser told me, he sunk the value of five or six thousand pound of his own, with which he was to settle himself somewhere in the Indies; for our merry lieutenant was to succeed him in his commission for the ship back; for he was resolved never to return again for England.

2nd Sail. So it seemed, by his fighting.

1st Sail. No; but he was a-weary of this side of the world here, they say.

2nd Sail. Ay, or else he would not have bid so fair for a passage into t'other.

1st Sail. Jack, thou think'st thyself in the forecastle, thou'rt so waggish; but I tell you, then, he had a mind to go live and bask himself on the sunny side of the globe.

2nd Sail. What, out of any discontent? for he's always as dogged as an old tarpaulin, when hindered of a voyage by a young pantaloon captain.

1st Sail. 'Tis true, I never saw him pleased but in the fight; and then he looked like one of us coming from the pay-table, with a new lining to our hats under our arms.

2nd Sail. A pox! he's like the Bay of Biscay, rough and angry, let the wind blow where 'twill.

1st Sail. Nay, there's no more dealing with him, than with the land in a storm, no near —

2nd Sail. 'Tis a hurry-durry blade. Dost thou remember after we had tugged hard the old leaky longboat to save his life, when I welcomed him ashore, he gave me a box on the ear, and called me fawning waterdog?

([*Re-*]*enter* Manly, *and* Freeman.)

1st Sail. Hold thy peace, Jack, and stand by; the foul weather's coming.

Man. You rascals! dogs! how could this tame thing get through you?

1st Sail. Faith, to tell your honor the truth, we were at hob in the hall, and whilst my brother and I were quarrelling about a cast, he slunk by us.

2nd Sail. He's a sneaking fellow I warrant for't.

Man. Have more care for the future, you slaves; go, and with drawn cutlasses stand at the stair-foot, and keep all that ask for me from coming up; suppose you were guarding the scuttle to the powder-room. Let none enter here, at your and their peril.

1st Sail. No, for the danger would be the same: you would blow them and us up, if we should.

2nd Sail. Must no one come to you, sir?

Man. No man, sir.

1st Sail. No man, sir; but a woman then, an't like your honor —

Man. No woman neither, you impertinent dog! Would you be pimping? a sea-pimp is the strangest monster she has.

2nd Sail. Indeed, an't like your honor, 'twill be hard for us to deny a woman anything, since we are so newly come on shore.

1st Sail. We'll let no old woman come up, though it were our trusting landlady at Wapping.

Man. Would you be witty, you brandy casks you? you become a jest as ill as you do a horse. Begone, you dogs! I hear a noise on the stairs.

(*Exeunt Sailors.*)

Free. Faith, I am sorry you would let the fop go, I intended to have had some sport with him.

Man. Sport with him! A pox! then, why did you not stay? You should have enjoyed your coxcomb, and had him to yourself, for me.

Free. No, I should not have cared for him without you neither; for the pleasure which fops afford is like that of drinking, only good when 'tis shared; and a fool, like a bottle, which would make you merry in company, will make you dull alone. But how the devil could you turn a man of his quality down stairs? You use a lord with very little ceremony, it seems.

Man. A lord! What, thou art one of those who esteem men only by the marks and value fortune has set upon 'em, and never consider intrinsic worth! But counterfeit honor will not be current with me: I weigh the man, not his title; 'tis not the king's stamp can make the metal better, or heavier. Your lord is a leaden shilling, which you may bend every way, and debases the stamp he bears, instead of being raised by't. — Here again, you slaves?

([*Re-*]*enter Sailors.*)

1st Sail. Only to receive farther instructions, an't like your honor. — What if a man should bring you money, should we turn him back?

Man. All men, I say: must I be pestered with you too? You dogs, away!

2nd Sail. Nay, I know one man your honor would not have us hinder coming to you, I'm sure.

Man. Who's that? speak quickly, slaves.

2nd Sail. Why, a man that should bring you a challenge; for though you refuse money, I'm sure you love fighting too well to refuse that.

Man. Rogue! rascal! dog!

(*Kicks the Sailors out.*)

Free. Nay, let the poor rogues have their forecastle jests; they cannot help 'em in a fight, scarce when a ship's sinking.

Man. Damn their untimely jests! a servant's jest is more sauciness then his counsel.

Free. But what, will you see nobody? not your friends?

Man. Friends! — I have but one, and he, I hear, is not in town; nay, can have but one friend, for a true heart admits but of one friendship, as of one love; but in having that friend, I have a thousand; for he has the courage of men in despair, yet the diffidency and caution of cowards; the secrecy of the revengeful, and the constancy of martyrs; one fit to advise, to keep a secret, to fight and die for his friend. Such I think him; for I have trusted him with my mistress in my absence: and the trust of beauty is sure the greatest we can show.

Free. Well, but all your good thoughts are not for him alone, I hope? Pray, what d'ye think of me for a friend?

Man. Of thee! Why, thou art a latitudinarian in friendship, that is, no friend; thou dost side with all mankind, but wilt suffer for none. Thou art indeed like your Lord Plausible, the pink of courtesy, therefore hast no friendship: for ceremony and great professing renders friendship as much suspected as it does religion.

Free. And no professing, no ceremony at all in friendship, were as unnatural and as undecent as in religion; and there is hardly such a thing as an honest hypocrite, who professes himself to be worse than he is, unless it be yourself; for though I could never get you to say you were my friend, I know you'll prove so.

Man. I must confess, I am so much your friend, I would not deceive you; therefore must tell you, not only because my heart is taken up, but according to your rules of friendship, I cannot be your friend.

Free. Why, pray?

Man. Because he that is, you'll say, a true friend to a man, is a friend to all his friends. But you must pardon me, I cannot wish well to pimps, flatterers, detractors, and cowards, stiff nodding knaves, and supple, pliant, kissing fools. Now, all these I have seen you use like the dearest friends in the world.

Free. Ha, ha, ha! — What, you observed me, I warrant, in the galleries at Whitehall, doing the business of the place? Pshaw! Court-professions, like court promises, go for nothing, man. But, faith, could you think I was a friend to all those I hugged, kissed, flattered, bowed to? Ha! ha! —

Man. You told 'em so, and swore it too; I heard you.

Free. Ay, but when their backs were turned, did I not tell you they were rogues, villains, rascals, whom I despised and hated?

Man. Very fine! But what reason had I to believe you spoke your heart to me, since you professed deceiving so many?

Free. Why, don't you know, good captain, that telling truth is a quality as prejudicial to a man that would thrive in the world, as square play to a cheat, or true love to a whore? Would you have a man speak truth to his ruin? You are severer than the law, which requires no man to swear against himself. You would have me speak truth against myself, I warrant, and tell my promising friend, the courtier, he has a bad memory.

Man. Yes.

Free. And so make him remember to forget my business? And I should tell the great lawyer, too, that he takes oftener fees to hold his tongue, than to speak?

Man. No doubt on't.

Free. Ay, and have him hang or ruin me, when he should come to be a judge, and I before him? And you would have me tell the new officer, who bought his employment lately, that he is a coward?

Man. Ay.

Free. And so get myself cashiered, not him, he having the better friends, though I the better sword? And I should tell the scribbler of honor, that heraldry were a prettier and fitter study for so fine a gentleman than poetry?

Man. Certainly.

Free. And so find myself mauled in his next hired lampoon? And you would have me tell the holy lady, too, she lies with her chaplain?

Man. No doubt on't.

Free. And so draw the clergy upon my back, and want a good table to dine at sometimes? And by the same reason too, I should tell you that the world thinks you a mad man, a brutal, and have you cut my throat, or worse, hate me. What other good success of all my plain-dealing could I have, than what I've mentioned?

Man. Why, first, your promising courtier would keep his word out of fear of more reproaches, or at least would give you no more vain hopes: your lawyer would serve you more faithfully; for he, having no honor but his interest, is truest still to him he knows suspects him: the new officer would provoke thee to make him a coward, and so be cashiered, that thou, or some other honest fellow, who had more courage than money, might get his place: the noble sonnetteer would trouble thee no more with his madrigals: the praying lady would leave off railing at wenching before thee, and not turn away her chambermaid for her own known frailty with thee: and I, instead of hating thee, should love thee for thy plain dealing; and in lieu of being mortified, am proud that the world and I think not well of one another.

Free. Well, doctors differ. You are for plain dealing, I find; but against your particular notions, I have the practice of the whole world. Observe but any morning what people do when they get together on the Exchange, in Westminster-hall, or the galleries in Whitehall.

Man. I must confess, there they seem to rehearse Bayes's grand dance: here you see a bishop bowing low to a gaudy atheist; a judge to a door-keeper; a great lord to a fishmonger, or a scrivener with a jack-chain about his neck; a lawyer to a sergeant-at-arms; a velvet physician to a threadbare chemist; and a supple gentleman-usher to a surly beefeater; and so tread round in a preposterous huddle of ceremony to each other, whilst they can hardly hold their solemn false countenances.

Free. Well, they understand the world.

Man. Which I do not, I confess.

Free. But, sir, pray believe the friendship I promise you real, whatsoever I have professed to others: try me, at least.

Man. Why, what would you do for me?

Free. I would fight for you.

Man. That you would do for your own honor: but what else?

Free. I would lend you money, if I had it.

Man. To borrow more of me another time. That were but putting your money to interest; a usurer would be as good a friend. But what other piece of friendship?

Free. I would speak well of you to your enemies.

Man. To encourage others to be your friends, by a show of gratitude: but what else?

Free. Nay, I would not hear you ill spoken of behind your back by my friend.

Man. Nay, then, thou'rt a friend, indeed; but it were unreasonable to expect it from thee, as the world goes now: when new friends, like new mistresses, are got by disparaging old ones.

(*Enter* Fidelia.)

But here comes another, will say as much at least. — Dost not thou love me devilishly too, my little volunteer, as well as he or any man can?

Fid. Better than any man can love you, my dear captain.

Man. Look you there, I told you so.

Fid. As well as you do truth or honor, sir; as well.

Man. Nay, good young gentleman, enough, for shame! Thou hast been a page, by thy flattering and lying, to one of those praying ladies who love flattery so well they are jealous of it; and wert turned away for saying the same things to the old housekeeper for sweetmeats, as you did to your lady; for thou flatterest everything and everybody alike.

Fid. You, dear sir, should not suspect the truth of what I say of you, though to you. Fame, the old liar, is believed when she speaks wonders of you; you cannot be flattered, sir, your merit is unspeakable.

Man. Hold, hold, sir, or I shall suspect worse of you, that you have been a cushion-bearer to some state-hypocrite, and turned away by the chaplains, for out-flattering their probation-sermons for a benefice.

Fid. Suspect me for anything, sir, but the want of love, faith, and duty to you, the bravest, worthiest of mankind; believe me, I could die for you, sir.

Man. Nay, there you lie, sir; did not I see thee more afraid in the fight than the chaplain of the ship, or the purser that bought his place?

Fid. Can he be said to be afraid, that ventures to sea with you?

Man. Fie! fie! no more; I shall hate thy flattery worse than thy cowardice, nay, than thy bragging.

Fid. Well, I own then I was afraid, mightily afraid; yet for you I would be afraid again, an hundred times afraid. Dying is ceasing to be afraid; and that I could do sure for you, and you'll believe me one day. (*Weeps.*)

Free. Poor youth! believe his eyes, if not his tongue: he seems to speak truth with them.

Man. What, does he cry? A pox on't! a maudlin flatterer is as nauseously troublesome as a maudlin drunkard. No more, you little milksop, do not cry, I'll never make thee afraid again; for of all men, if I had occasion, thou shouldst not be my second; and when I go to sea again, thou shalt venture thy life no more with me.

Fid. Why, will you leave me behind then? — (*Aside.*) If you would preserve my life, I'm sure you should not.

Man. Leave thee behind! Ay, ay, thou art a hopeful youth for the shore only; here thou wilt live to be cherished by fortune and the great ones; for thou mayst easily come to outflatter a dull poet, outlie a coffee-house or gazette-writer, outswear a knight of the post, outwatch a pimp, outfawn a rook, outpromise a lover, outrail a wit, and outbrag a sea-captain: — all this thou canst do, because thou'rt a coward, a thing I hate; therefore thou'lt do better with the world than with me; and these are the good courses you must take in the world. There's good advice, at least, at parting; go, and be happy with't.

Fid. Parting, sir! Oh let me not hear that dismal word!

Man. If my words frighten thee, begone the sooner; for, to be plain with thee, cowardice and I cannot dwell together.

Fid. And cruelty and courage never dwelt together sure, sir. Do not turn me off to shame and misery; for I am helpless and friendless.

Man. Friendless! there are half a score friends for thee then. (*Offers her gold.*) I leave myself no more: they'll help thee a little. Begone, go, I must be cruel to thee (if thou callest it so) out of pity.

Fid. If you would be cruelly pitiful, sir, let it be with your sword, not gold. (*Exit.*)

([*Re-*]*enter first Sailor.*)

1st Sail. We have, with much ado, turned away two gentlemen, who told us, forty times over, their names were Mr. Novel and Major Oldfox.

Man. Well, to your post again. — (*Exit Sailor.*) But how come those puppies coupled always together?

Free. Oh, the coxcombs keep each other company, to show each other, as Novel calls it; or, as Oldfox says, like two knives, to whet one another.

Man. And set other people's teeth on edge.

([*Re-*]*enter second Sailor.*)

2nd Sail. Here is a woman, an't like your honor, scolds and bustles with us to come in, as much as a seaman's widow at the Navy office: her name is Mrs. Blackacre.

Man. That field too!

Free. The Widow Blackacre, is it not? that litigious she petty-fogger, who is at law and difference with all the world; but I wish I could make her agree with me in the church: they say she has fifteen hundred pounds a year jointure, and the care of her son, that is, the destruction of his estate.

Man. Her lawyers, attorneys, and solicitors have fifteen hundred pounds a year, whilst she is contented to be poor, to make other people so; for she is as vexatious as her father was, the great attorney, nay, as a dozen Norfolk attorneys, and implacable an adversary as a wife suing for alimony, or a parson for his tithes; and she loves an Easter term, or any term, not as other country ladies do, to come up to be fine, cuckold their husbands, and take their pleasure; for she has no pleasure but in vexing others, and is usually clothed and daggled like a bawd in disguise, pursued through alleys by sergeants. When she is in town, she lodges in one of the inns of Chancery, where she breeds her son, and is herself his tutoress in law-French; and for her country abode, though she has no estate there, she chooses Norfolk. But, bid her come in, with a pox to her! she is Olivia's kinswoman, and may make me amends for her visit, by some discourse of that dear woman.

(*Exit Sailor.*)

(*Enter* Widow Blackacre, *with a mantle and a green bag, and several papers in the other hand:* Jerry Blackacre, *her son, in a gown, laden with green bags, following her.*)

Wid. I never had so much to do with a judge's doorkeeper, as with yours; but —

Man. But the incomparable Olivia, how does she since I went?

Wid. Since you went, my suit —

Man. Olivia, I say, is she well?

Wid. My suit, if you had not returned —

Man. Damn your suit! how does your cousin Olivia?

Wid. My suit, I say, had been quite lost; but now —

Man. But now, where is Olivia? in town? for —

Wid. For to-morrow we are to have a hearing.

Man. Would you would let me have a hearing to-day!

Wid. But why won't you hear me?

Man. I am no judge, and you talk of nothing but suits; but, pray tell me, when did you see Olivia?

Wid. I am no visitor, but a woman of business; or if I ever visit, 'tis only the Chancery-lane ladies, ladies towards the law; and not any of your lazy, good-for-nothing flirts, who cannot read law-French, though a gallant writ it. But as I was telling you, my suit —

Man. Damn these impertinent, vexatious people of business, of all sexes! they are still troubling the world with the tedious recitals of their lawsuits: and one can no more stop their mouths than a wit's, when he talks of himself, or an intelligencer's, when he talks of other people.

Wid. And a pox of all vexatious, impertinent lovers! they are still perplexing the world with the tedious narrations of their love-suits, and discourses of their mistresses! You are as troublesome to a poor widow of business, as a young coxcombly rhyming lover.

Man. And thou art as troublesome to me, as a rook to a losing gamester, or a young putter of cases to his mistress or sempstress, who has love in her head for another.

Wid. Nay, since you talk of putting of cases, and will not hear me speak, hear our Jerry a little; let him put our case to you, for the trial's to-morrow; and since you are my chief witness, I would have your memory refreshed and your judgment informed, that you may not give your evidence improperly. — Speak out, child.

Jer. Yes, forsooth. Hem! hem! John-a-Stiles —

Man. You may talk, young lawyer, but I shall no more mind you, than a hungry judge does a cause after the clock has struck one.

Free. Nay, you'll find him as peevish too.

Wid. No matter. Jerry, go on. — Do you observe it then, sir; for I think I have seen you in a gown once. Lord, I could hear our Jerry put cases all day long! Mark him, sir.

Jer. John-a-Stiles — no — there are first, Fitz, Pere, and Ayle, — no, no, Ayle, Pere, and Fitz; Ayle is seised in fee of Blackacre; John-a-Stiles disseises Ayle; Ayle makes claim, and the disseisor dies; then the Ayle — no, the Fitz —

Wid. No, the Pere, sirrah.

Jer. Oh, the Pere! ay, the Pere, sir, and the Fitz — no, the Ayle, — no, the Pere and the Fitz, sir, and —

Man. Damn Pere, Mere, and Fitz, sir!

Wid. No, you are out, child. — Hear me, captain, then. There are Ayle, Pere, and Fitz; Ayle is seised in fee of Blackacre; and, being so seised, John-a-Stiles disseises the Ayle, Ayle makes claim, and the disseisor dies; and then the Pere re-enters, the Pere, sirrah, the Pere — (*to* Jerry) and the Fitz enters upon the Pere, and the Ayle brings his writ of disseisin in the post; and the Pere brings his writ of disseisin in the Pere, and —

Man. Canst thou hear this stuff, Freeman? I could as soon suffer a whole noise of flatterers at a great man's levee in a morning; but thou hast servile complacency enough to listen to a quibbling statesman in disgrace, nay, and be beforehand with him, in laughing at his dull no-jest; but I — (*Offering to go out.*)

Wid. Nay, sir, hold! Where's the subpœna, Jerry? I must serve you, sir. You are required, by this, to give your testimony —

Man. I'll be forsworn to be revenged on thee.

(*Exit* Manly, *throwing away the subpœna.*)

Wid. Get you gone, for a lawless companion! — Come, Jerry, I had almost forgot, we were to meet at the master's at three: let us mind our business still, child.

Jer. Ay, forsooth, e'en so let's.

Free. Nay, madam, now I would beg you to hear me a little, a little of my business.

Wid. I have business of my own calls me away, sir.

Free. My business would prove yours too, dear madam.

Wid. Yours would be some sweet business, I warrant. What, 'tis no Westminster Hall business? Would you have my advice?

Free. No, faith, 'tis a little Westminster Abbey business: I would have your consent.

Wid. O fie, fie, sir! to me such discourse, before my dear minor there!

Jer. Ay, ay, mother, he would be taking livery and seisin of your jointure, by digging the turf; but I'll watch your waters, bully, i'fac. — Come away, mother.

(*Exit* Jerry, *haling away his Mother.*)

(*Manet* Freeman: *enter to him* Fidelia.)

Fid. Dear sir, you have pity; beget but some in our captain for me.

Free. Where is he?

Fid. Within; swearing as much as he did in the great storm, and cursing you, and sometimes sinks into calms and sighs, and talks of his Olivia.

Free. He would never trust me to see her. Is she handsome?

Fid. No, if you'll take my word; but I am not a proper judge.

Free. What is she?

Fid. A gentlewoman, I suppose, but of as mean a fortune as beauty; but her relations would not suffer her to go with him to the Indies: and his aversion to this side of the world, together with the late opportunity of commanding the convoy, would not let him stay here longer, though to enjoy her.

Free. He loves her mightily then?

Fid. Yes, so well, that the remainder of his fortune (I hear about five or six thousand pounds) he has left her, in case he had died by the way, or before she could prevail with her friends to follow him, which he expected she should do, and has left behind him his great bosom friend to be her convoy to him.

Free. What charms has she for him, if she be not handsome?

Fid. He fancies her, I suppose, the only woman of truth and sincerity in the world.

Free. No common beauty, I confess.

Fid. Or else sure he would not have trusted her with so great a share of his fortune, in his absence; I suppose (since his late loss) all he has.

Free. Why, has he left it in her own custody?

Fid. I am told so.

Free. Then he has showed love to her indeed, in leaving her, like an old husband that dies as soon as he has made his wife a good jointure. — But I'll go in to him, and speak for you, and know more from him of his Olivia. (*Exit.*)

(*Manet* Fidelia *Sola.*)

Fid. His Olivia, indeed, his happy Olivia,
Yet she was left behind, when I was with him:
But she was ne'er out of his mind or heart.
She has told him she loved him; I have show'd it,
And durst not tell him so, till I had done,
Under this habit such convincing acts
Of loving friendship for him, that through it
He first might find out both my sex and love;
And, when I'd had him from his fair Olivia,
And this bright world of artful beauties here,
Might then have hoped, he would have look'd on me,
Amongst the sooty Indians; and I could
To choose there live his wife, where wives are forced
To live no longer, when their husbands die;
Nay, what's yet worse, to share 'em whilst they live
With many rival wives. But here he comes,
And I must yet keep out of his sight, not
To lose it for ever. (*Exit.*)

([*Re-*]*enter* Manly *and* Freeman.)

Free. But pray, what strange charms has she that could make you love?

Man. Strange charms indeed! She has beauty enough to call in question her wit or virtue, and her form would make a starved hermit a ravisher; yet her virtue and conduct would preserve her from the subtle lust of a pampered prelate. She is so perfect a beauty, that art could not better it, nor affectation deform it; yet all this is nothing. Her tongue as well as face ne'er knew artifice; nor ever did her words or looks contradict her heart. She is all truth, and hates the lying, masking, daubing world, as I do; for which I love her, and for which I think she dislikes not me: for she has often shut out of her conversation for mine, the gaudy fluttering parrots of the town, apes and echoes of men only, and refused their commonplace pert chat, flattery, and submissions, to be entertained with my sullen bluntness, and honest love. And, last of all, swore to me, since her parents would not suffer her to go with me, she would stay behind for no other man; but follow me, without their leave, if not to be obtained. Which oath —

Free. Did you think she would keep?

Man. Yes; for she is not (I tell you) like other women, but can keep her promise, though she has sworn to keep it. But, that she might the better keep it, I left her the value of five or six thousand pound: for women's wants are generally their most importunate solicitors to love or marriage.

Free. And money summons lovers more than beauty, and augments but their importunity, and their number; so makes it the harder for a woman to deny 'em. For my part, I am for the French maxim: "If you would have your female subjects loyal, keep 'em poor." — But in short, that your mistress may not marry, you have given her a portion.

Man. She had given me her heart first, and I am satisfied with the security; I can never doubt her truth and constancy.

Free. It seems you do, since you are fain to bribe it with money. But how come you to be so diffident of the man that says he loves you, and not doubt the woman that says it?

Man. I should (I confess) doubt the love of any other woman but her, as I do the friendship of any other man but him I have trusted; but I have such proofs of their faith as cannot deceive me.

Free. Cannot!

Man. Not but I know that generally no man can be a great enemy but under the name of friend; and if you are a cuckold, it is your friend only that makes you so, for your enemy is not admitted to your house: if you are cheated in your fortune, 'tis your friend that does it, for your enemy is not made your trustee: if your honor or good name be injured, 'tis your friend that does it still, because your enemy is not believed against you. Therefore, I rather choose to go where honest, downright barbarity is professed, where men devour one another like generous hungry lions and tigers, not like crocodiles; where they think the devil white, of our complexion; and I am already so far an Indian. But if your weak faith doubts this miracle of a woman, come along with me, and believe; and thou wilt find her so handsome, that thou, who art so much my friend, wilt have a mind to lie with her, and so wilt not fail to discover what her faith and thine is to me.

When we're in love, the great adversity,
Our friends and mistresses at once we
try.

ACT II.

Scene I. — Olivia's *Lodging.*

(*Enter* Olivia, Eliza, [*and*] Lettice.)

Oliv. Ah, cousin, what a world 'tis we live in! I am so weary of it.

Eliza. Truly, cousin, I can find no fault with it, but that we cannot always live in't; for I can never be weary of it.

Oliv. O hideous! you cannot be in earnest sure, when you say you like the filthy world.

Eliza. You cannot be in earnest sure, when you say you dislike it.

Oliv. You are a very censorious creature, I find.

Eliza. I must confess, I think we women as often discover where we love by railing, as men when they lie by their swearing; and the world is but a constant keeping gallant, whom we fail not to quarrel with when anything crosses us, yet cannot part with't for our hearts.

Let. A gallant indeed, madam, whom ladies first make jealous, and then quarrel with it for being so; for if, by her indiscretion, a lady be talked of for a man, she cries presently, "'Tis a censorious world!"; if, by her vanity, the intrigue be found out, "'Tis a prying, malicious world!"; if, by her over-fondness, the gallant proves unconstant, "'Tis a false world!"; and if, by her niggardliness, the chambermaid tells, "'Tis a perfidious world!" But that, I'm sure, your ladyship cannot say of the world yet, as bad as 'tis.

Oliv. But I may say, "'Tis a very impertinent world!" — Hold your peace. — And, cousin, if the world be a gallant, 'tis such an one as is my aversion. Pray name it no more.

Eliza. But is it possible the world, which has such variety of charms for other women, can have none for you? Let's see — first, what d'ye think of dressing and fine clothes?

Oliv. Dressing! Fie, fie, 'tis my aversion. — [*To* Lettice.] But come hither, you dowdy; methinks you might have opened this toure better. O hideous! I cannot suffer it! D'ye see how't sits?

Eliza. Well enough, cousin, if dressing be your aversion.

Oliv. 'Tis so: and for variety of rich clothes, they are more my aversion.

Let. Ay, 'tis because your ladyship wears 'em too long; for indeed a gown, like a gallant, grows one's aversion, by having too much of it.

Oliv. Insatiable creature! I'll be sworn I have had this not above three days, cousin, and within this month have made some six more.

Eliza. Then your aversion to 'em is not altogether so great.

Oliv. Alas! 'tis for my woman only I wear 'em, cousin.

Let. If it be for me only, madam, pray do not wear 'em.

Eliza. But what d'ye think of visits — balls?

Oliv. Oh, I detest 'em!

Eliza. Of plays?

Oliv. I abominate 'em; filthy, obscene, hideous things!

Eliza. What say you to masquerading in the winter, and Hyde Park in the summer?

Oliv. Insipid pleasures I taste not.

Eliza. Nay, if you are for more solid pleasures, what think you of a rich young husband?

Oliv. O horrid! marriage! what a pleasure you have found out! I nauseate it of all things.

Let. But what does your ladyship think then of a liberal, handsome, young lover?

Oliv. A handsome young fellow, you impudent! Begone, out of my sight. Name a handsome young fellow to me! foh, a hideous, handsome, young fellow I abominate! (*Spits.*)

Eliza. Indeed! But let's see — will nothing please you? what d'ye think of the court?

Oliv. How? the court! the court, cousin! my aversion, my aversion, my aversion of all aversions!

Eliza. How? the court! where —

Oliv. Where sincerity is a quality as out of fashion, and as unprosperous, as bashfulness: I could not laugh at a quibble, though it were a fat privy-counsellor's; nor praise a lord's ill verses, though I were myself the subject; nor an old lady's young looks, though I were her woman; nor sit to a vain young smile-maker, though he flattered me. In short, I could not gloat upon a man when he comes into a room, and laugh at him when he goes out: I cannot rail at the absent, to flatter the standers-by; I —

Eliza. Well, but railing now is so common, that 'tis no more malice, but the fashion; and the absent think they are no more the worse for being railed at, than the present think they are the better for being flattered; and for the court —

Oliv. Nay, do not defend the court; for you'll make me rail at it, like a trusting citizen's widow.

Eliza. Or like a Holborn lady, who could not get into the last ball, or was out of countenance in the drawing-room the last Sunday of her appearance there; for none rail at the court but those who cannot get into it, or else who are ridiculous when they are there; and I shall suspect you were laughed at when you were last there, or would be a maid of honor.

Oliv. I a maid of honor! To be a maid of honor were yet of all things my aversion.

Eliza. In what sense am I to understand you? But, in fine, by the word aversion, I'm sure you dissemble; for I never knew woman yet that used it who did not. Come, our tongues belie our hearts more than our pocket-glasses do our faces. But methinks we ought to leave off dissembling, since 'tis grown of no use to us; for all wise observers understand us now-a-days, as they do dreams, almanacs, and Dutch gazettes, by the contrary: and a man no more believes a woman, when she says she has an aversion for him, than when she says she'll cry out.

Oliv. O filthy! hideous! Peace, cousin, or your discourse will be my aversion; and you may believe me.

Eliza. Yes; for if anything be a woman's aversion, 'tis plain dealing from another woman: and perhaps that's your quarrel to the world; for that will talk, as your woman says.

Oliv. Talk? not of me sure; for what men do I converse with? what visits do I admit?

(*Enter Boy.*)

Boy. Here's the gentleman to wait upon you, madam.

Oliv. On me! you little, unthinking fop, d'ye know what you say?

Boy. Yes, madam, 'tis the gentleman that comes every day to you, who —

Oliv. Hold your peace, you heedless little animal, and get you gone. — (*Exit Boy.*) This country boy, cousin, takes my dancing-master, tailor, or the spruce milliner, for visitors.

Let. No, madam; 'tis Mr. Novel, I'm sure, by his talking so loud: I know his voice too, madam.

OLIV. You know nothing, you buffle-headed, stupid creature you; you would make my cousin believe I receive visits. But if it be Mr. — what did you call him?

LET. Mr. Novel, madam; he that —

OLIV. Hold your peace, I'll hear no more of him; but if it be your Mr. — (I can't think of his name again) I suppose he has followed my cousin hither.

ELIZA. No, cousin, I will not rob you of the honor of the visit: 'tis to you, cousin, for I know him not.

OLIV. Nor did I ever hear of him before, upon my honor, cousin; besides, han't I told you, that visits, and the business of visits, flattery, and detraction, are my aversion? D'ye think then I would admit such a coxcomb as he is? who, rather than not rail, will rail at the dead, whom none speak ill of; and, rather than not flatter, will flatter the poets of the age, whom none will flatter; who affects novelty as much as the fashion, and is as fantastical as changeable, and as well known as the fashion; who likes nothing but what is new, nay, would choose to have his friend, or his title, a new one. In fine, he is my aversion.

ELIZA. I find you do know him, cousin; at least, have heard of him.

OLIV. Yes, now I remember, I have heard of him.

ELIZA. Well; but since he is such a coxcomb, for heaven's sake, let him not come up. Tell him, Mrs. Lettice, your lady is not within.

OLIV. No, Lettice, tell him my cousin is here, and that he may come up; for, notwithstanding I detest the sight of him, you may like his conversation; and though I would use him scurvily, I will not be rude to you in my own lodging; since he has followed you hither, let him come up, I say.

ELIZA. Very fine! Pray let him go to the devil, I say, for me: I know him not, nor desire it. Send him away, Mrs. Lettice.

OLIV. Upon my word, she shan't: I must disobey your commands, to comply with your desires. Call him up, Lettice.

ELIZA. Nay, I'll swear she shall not stir on that errand.

(*Holds* LETTICE.)

OLIV. Well then, I'll call him myself for you, since you will have it so. —

(*Calls out at the door.*)

Mr. Novel, sir, sir!

(*Enter* NOVEL.)

NOV. Madam, I beg your pardon; perhaps you were busy: I did not think you had company with you.

ELIZA (*aside*). Yet he comes to me, cousin!

OLIV. — Chairs there.

(*They sit.*)

NOV. Well; but, madam, d'ye know whence I come now?

OLIV. From some melancholy place, I warrant, sir, since they have lost your good company.

ELIZA. So!

NOV. From a place where they have treated me at dinner with so much civility and kindness, a pox on 'em! that I could hardly get away to you, dear madam.

OLIV. You have a way with you so new and obliging, sir!

ELIZA (*apart to* OLIVIA). You hate flattery, cousin!

NOV. Nay, faith, madam, d'ye think my way new? Then you are obliging, madam. I must confess, I hate imitation, to do anything like other people. All that know me do me the honor to say, I am an original, faith; but, as I was saying, madam, I have been treated to-day with all the ceremony and kindness imaginable at my Lady Autumn's; but the nauseous old woman at the upper end of her table —

OLIV. Revives the old Grecian custom, of serving in a death's head with their banquets.

NOV. Ha, ha! fine, just, i'faith; nay, and new. 'Tis like eating with the ghost in "The Libertine:" she would frighten a man from her dinner with her hollow invitations, and spoil one's stomach —

OLIV. To meat, or women. I detest her hollow cherry cheeks; she looks like an old coach new painted: affecting an unseemly smugness, whilst she is ready to drop in pieces.

Eliza (*apart to* Olivia). You hate detraction, I see, cousin!

Nov. But the silly old fury, whilst she affects to look like a woman of this age, talks —

Oliv. Like one of the last; and as passionately as an old courtier who has outlived his office.

Nov. Yes, madam; but pray let me give you her character. Then she never counts her age by the years, but —

Oliv. By the masques she has lived to see.

Nov. Nay then, madam, I see you think a little harmless railing too great a pleasure for any but yourself; and therefore I've done.

Oliv. Nay, faith, you shall tell me who you had there at dinner.

Nov. If you would hear me, madam.

Oliv. Most patiently; speak, sir.

Nov. Then, we had her daughter —

Oliv. Ay, her daughter, the very disgrace to good clothes, which she always wears but to heighten her deformity, not mend it; for she is still most splendidly, gallantly ugly, and looks like an ill piece of daubing in a rich frame.

Nov. So! But have you done with her, madam? And can you spare her to me a little now?

Oliv. Ay, ay, sir.

Nov. Then, she is like —

Oliv. She is, you'd say, like a city bride, the greater fortune, but not the greater beauty, for her dress.

Nov. Well: yet have you done, madam? Then she —

Oliv. Then she bestows as unfortunately on her face all the graces in fashion, as the languishing eye, the hanging or pouting lip; but as the fool is never more provoking than when he aims at wit, the ill-favored of our sex are never more nauseous than when they would be beauties, adding to their natural deformity the artificial ugliness of affectation.

Eliza. So, cousin, I find one may have a collection of all one's acquaintances' pictures as well at your house as at Mr. Lely's; only the difference is, there we find 'em much handsomer than they are, and like; here, much uglier, and like: and you are the first of the profession of picture-drawing I ever knew without flattery.

Oliv. I draw after the life; do nobody wrong, cousin.

Eliza. No, you hate flattery and detraction!

Oliv. But, Mr. Novel, who had you besides at dinner?

Nov. Nay, the devil take me if I tell you, unless you will allow me the privilege of railing in my turn. — But, now I think on't, the women ought to be your province, as the men are mine: and you must know, we had him whom —

Oliv. Him, whom —

Nov. What, invading me already? And giving the character, before you know the man?

Eliza. No, that is not fair, though it be usual.

Oliv. I beg your pardon, Mr. Novel; pray go on.

Nov. Then, I say, we had that familiar coxcomb who is at home wheresoe'er he comes.

Oliv. Ay, that fool —

Nov. Nay then, madam, your servant; I'm gone. Taking a fool out of one's mouth is worse than taking the bread out of one's mouth.

Oliv. I've done; your pardon, Mr. Novel; pray proceed.

Nov. I say, the rogue, that he may be the only wit in company, will let nobody else talk, and —

Oliv. Ay, those fops who love to talk all themselves are of all things my aversion.

Nov. Then you'll let me speak, madam, sure. The rogue, I say, will force his jest upon you; and I hate a jest that's forced upon a man, as much as a glass.

Eliza. Why, I hope, sir, he does not expect a man of your temperance in jesting should do him reason?

Nov. What, interruption from this side too! I must then —

(*Offers to rise.* Olivia *holds him.*)

Oliv. No, sir. — You must know,

cousin, that fop he means, though he talks only to be commended, will not give you leave to do't.

Nov. But, madam —

Oliv. He a wit! Hang him, he's only an adopter of straggling jests and fatherless lampoons; by the credit of which he eats at good tables, and so, like the barren beggar-woman, lives by borrowed children.

Nov. Madam —

Oliv. And never was author of anything but his news; but that is still all his own.

Nov. Madam, pray —

Oliv. An eternal babbler; and makes no more use of his ears, than a man that sits at a play by his mistress, or in Fop-corner. He's, in fine, a base detracting fellow, and is my aversion. — But who else prithee, Mr. Novel, was there with you? Nay, you shan't stir.

Nov. I beg your pardon, madam; I cannot stay in any place where I'm not allowed a little christian liberty of railing.

Oliv. Nay, prithee, Mr. Novel, stay; and though you should rail at me, I would hear you with patience. Prithee, who else was there with you?

Nov. Your servant, madam.

Oliv. Nay, prithee tell us, Mr. Novel, prithee do.

Nov. We had nobody else.

Oliv. Nay, faith, I know you had. Come, my Lord Plausible was there too, who is, cousin, a —

Eliza. You need not tell me what he is, cousin; for I know him to be a civil, good-natured, harmless gentleman, that speaks well of all the world, and is always in good-humor; and —

Oliv. Hold, cousin, hold, I hate detraction; but I must tell you, cousin, his civility is cowardice, his good-nature want of wit; and he has neither courage nor sense to rail: and for his being always in humor, 'tis because he is never dissatisfied with himself. In fine, he is my aversion; and I never admit his visits beyond my hall.

Nov. No, he visit you! Damn him, cringing, grinning rogue! if I should see him coming up to you, I would make bold to kick him down again. — Ha! —

(*Enter my* Lord Plausible.)

My dear lord, your most humble servant.

(*Rises and salutes* Lord Plausible, *and kisses him.*)

Eliza (*aside*). So! I find kissing and railing succeed each other with the angry men as well as with the angry women; and their quarrels are like love-quarrels, since absence is the only cause of them; for as soon as the man appears again, they are over.

L. Plau. Your most faithful, humble servant, generous Mr. Novel; and, madam, I am your eternal slave, and kiss your fair hands; which I had done sooner, according to your commands, but —

Oliv. No excuses, my lord.

Eliza (*apart*). What, you sent for him then, cousin?

Nov. (*aside*). Ha! invited!

Oliv. I know you must divide yourself; for your good company is too general a good to be engrossed by any particular friend.

L. Plau. O Lord, madam, my company! your most obliged, faithful, humble servant. But I could have brought you good company indeed, for I parted at your door with two of the worthiest, bravest men —

Oliv. Who were they, my lord?

Nov. Who do you call the worthiest, bravest men, pray?

L. Plau. Oh, the wisest, bravest gentlemen! men of such honor and virtue! of such good qualities! ah —

Eliza (*aside*). This is a coxcomb that speaks ill of all people a different way, and libels everybody with dull praise, and commonly in the wrong place; so makes his panegyrics abusive lampoons.

Oliv. But pray let me know who they were?

L. Plau. Ah! such patterns of heroic virtue! such —

Nov. Well, but who the devil were they?

L. Plau. The honor of our nation! the glory of our age! Ah, I could dwell a twelvemonth on their praise; which indeed I might spare by telling their names: Sir John Current and Sir Richard Court-Title.

Nov. Court-Title! Ha, ha!

Oliv. And Sir John Current! Why will you keep such a wretch company, my lord?

L. Plau. O madam, seriously you are a little too severe; for he is a man of unquestioned reputation in everything.

Oliv. Yes, because he endeavors only with the women to pass for a man of courage, and with the bullies for a wit; with the wits for a man of business, and with the men of business for a favorite at court; and at court for city-security.

Nov. And for Sir Richard, he —

L. Plau. He loves your choice, picked company, persons that —

Oliv. He loves a lord indeed; but —

Nov. Pray, dear madam, let me have but a bold stroke or two at his picture. He loves a lord, as you say, though —

Oliv. Though he borrowed his money, and ne'er paid him again.

Nov. And would bespeak a place three days before at the back-end of a lord's coach to Hyde Park.

L. Plau. Nay, i'faith, i'faith, you are both too severe.

Oliv. Then to show yet more his passion for quality, he makes love to that fulsome coach-load of honor, my Lady Goodly, for he is always at her lodging.

L. Plau. Because it is the conventicle-gallant, the meeting-house of all the fair ladies and glorious superfine beauties of the town.

Nov. Very fine ladies! there's first —

Oliv. Her honor, as fat as an hostess.

L. Plau. She is something plump indeed, a goodly, comely, graceful person.

Nov. Then there's my Lady Frances, what d'ye call her? as ugly —

Oliv. As a citizen's lawfully begotten daughter.

L. Plau. She has wit in abundance, and the handsomest heel, elbow, and tip of an ear, you ever saw.

Nov. Heel and elbow! ha, ha! And there's my Lady Betty, you know —

Oliv. As sluttish and slatternly as an Irish woman bred in France.

L. Plau. Ah, all she has hangs with a loose air, indeed, and becoming negligence.

Eliza. You see all faults with lovers' eyes, I find, my lord.

L. Plau. Ah, madam, your most obliged, faithful, humble servant to command! But you can say nothing sure against the superfine mistress —

Oliv. I know who you mean. She is as censorious and detracting a jade as a superannuated sinner.

L. Plau. She has a smart way of raillery, 'tis confessed.

Nov. And then, for Mrs. Grideline —

L. Plau. She, I'm sure, is —

Oliv. One that never spoke ill of anybody, 'tis confessed; for she is as silent in conversation as a country lover, and no better company than a clock, or a weather-glass: for if she sounds, 'tis but once an hour, to put you in mind of the time of day, or to tell you 'twill be cold or hot, rain or snow.

L. Plau. Ah, poor creature! she's extremely good and modest.

Nov. And for Mrs. Bridlechin, she's —

Oliv. As proud as a churchman's wife.

L. Plau. She's a woman of great spirit and honor, and will not make herself cheap, 'tis true.

Nov. Then Mrs. Hoyden, that calls all people by their surnames, and is —

Oliv. As familiar a duck —

Nov. As an actress in the tiring room. There I was once beforehand with you, madam.

L. Plau. Mrs. Hoyden! a poor, affable, good-natured soul! But the divine Mrs. Trifle comes thither too: sure her beauty, virtue, and conduct, you can say nothing to.

Oliv. No!

Nov. No! — Pray let me speak, madam.

Oliv. First, can any one be called beautiful that squints?

L. Plau. Her eyes languish a little, I own.

Nov. Languish! ha, ha!

Oliv. Languish! — Then, for her conduct, she was seen at "The Country Wife," after the first day. There's for you, my lord.

L. Plau. But, madam, she was not

seen to use her fan all the play long, turn aside her head, or by a conscious blush discover more guilt than modesty.

Oliv. Very fine! Then you think a woman modest that sees the hideous "Country Wife" without blushing or publishing her detestation of it? D'ye hear him, cousin?

Eliza. Yes, and am, I must confess, something of his opinion, and think, that as an over-conscious fool at a play, by endeavoring to show the author's want of wit, exposes his own to more censure, so may a lady call her own modesty in question, by publicly cavilling with the poet's; for all those grimaces of honor, and artificial modesty, disparage a woman's real virtue, as much as the use of white and red does the natural complexion: and you must use very, very little, if you would have it thought your own.

Oliv. Then you would have a woman of honor with passive looks, ears, and tongue, undergo all the hideous obscenity she hears at nasty plays?

Eliza. Truly, I think a woman betrays her want of modesty, by showing it publicly in a playhouse, as much as a man does his want of courage by a quarrel there; for the truly modest and stout say least, and are least exceptious, especially in public.

Oliv. O hideous, cousin! this cannot be your opinion; but you are one of those who have the confidence to pardon the filthy play.

Eliza. Why, what is there of ill in't, say you?

Oliv. O fie! fie! fie! would you put me to the blush anew? call all the blood into my face again? But to satisfy you then; first, the clandestine obscenity in the very name of Horner.

Eliza. Truly, 'tis so hidden, I cannot find it out, I confess.

Oliv. O horrid! Does it not give you the rank conception or image of a goat, a town-bull, or a satyr? nay, what is yet a filthier image than all the rest, that of an eunuch?

Eliza. What then? I can think of a goat, a bull, or satyr, without any hurt.

Oliv. Ay; but cousin, one cannot stop there.

Eliza. I can, cousin.

Oliv. O no; for when you have those filthy creatures in your head once, the next thing you think, is what they do; as their defiling of honest men's beds and couches, rapes upon sleeping and waking country virgins, under hedges, and on haycocks; nay, farther —

Eliza. Nay, no farther, cousin. We have enough of your comment on the play, which will make me more ashamed than the play itself.

Oliv. Oh, believe me, 'tis a filthy play! and you may take my word for a filthy play as soon as another's; but the filthiest thing in that play, or any other play, is —

Eliza. Pray keep it to yourself, if it be so.

Oliv. No, faith, you shall know it; I'm resolved to make you out of love with the play. I say, the lewdest, filthiest thing is his china; nay, I will never forgive the beastly author his china, he has quite taken away the reputation of poor china itself, and sullied the most innocent and pretty furniture of a lady's chamber; insomuch that I was fain to break all my defiled vessels. You see I have none left; nor you, I hope.

Eliza. You'll pardon me, I cannot think the worse of my china for that of the playhouse.

Oliv. Why, you will not keep any now, sure! 'Tis now as unfit an ornament for a lady's chamber as the pictures that come from Italy and other hot countries, as appears by their nudities, which I always cover, or scratch out, whereso'er I find 'em. But china! out upon't, filthy china! nasty, debauched china!

Eliza. All this will not put me out of conceit with china, nor the play, which is acted to-day, or another of the same beastly author's, as you call him, which I'll go see.

Oliv. You will not, sure! nay, you sha' not venture your reputation by going, and mine by leaving me alone with two men here: nay, you'll disoblige me forever, if — (*Pulls her back.*)

Eliza. I stay! — your servant.

(*Exit* Eliza.)

Oliv. Well — but, my lord, though you justify everybody, you cannot in earnest uphold so beastly a writer, whose ink is so smutty, as one may say.

L. Plau. Faith, I dare swear the poor man did not think to disoblige the ladies by any amorous, soft, passionate, luscious saying in his play.

Oliv. Foy, my lord! But what think you, Mr. Novel, of the play? though I know you are a friend to all that are new.

Nov. Faith, madam, I must confess, the new plays would not be the worse for my advice, but I could never get the silly rogues, the poets, to mind what I say; but I'll tell you what counsel I gave the surly fool you spake of.

Oliv. What was't?

Nov. Faith, to put his play into rhyme; for rhyme, you know, often makes mystical nonsense pass with the critics for wit, and a double-meaning saying with the ladies, for soft, tender, and moving passion. But now I talk of passion, I saw your old lover this morning — Captain —

(*Whispers.*)

(*Enter* Captain Manly, Freeman, *and* Fidelia *standing behind.*)

Oliv. Whom? — nay, you need not whisper.

Man. We are luckily got hither unobserved! — How! in a close conversation with these supple rascals, the outcasts of sempstresses' shops!

Free. Faith, pardon her, captain, that, since she could no longer be entertained with your manly bluntness and honest love, she takes up with the pert chat and commonplace flattery of these fluttering parrots of the town, apes and echoes of men only.

Man. Do not you, sir, play the echo too, mock me, dally with my own words, and show yourself as impertinent as they are.

Free. Nay, captain —

Fid. Nay, lieutenant, do not excuse her; methinks she looks very kindly upon 'em both, and seems to be pleased with what that fool there says to her.

Man. You lie, sir! and hold your peace, that I may not be provoked to give you a worse reply.

Oliv. Manly returned, d'ye say! And is he safe?

Nov. My lord saw him too. — Hark you, my lord.

(*Whispers to* Plausible.)

Man. (*aside*). She yet seems concerned for my safety, and perhaps they are admitted now here but for their news of me; for intelligence indeed is the common passport of nauseous fools, when they go their round of good tables and houses.

Oliv. I heard of his fighting only, without particulars, and confess I always loved his brutal courage, because it made me hope it might rid me of his more brutal love.

Man. (*aside*). What's that?

Oliv. But is he at last returned, d'ye say, unhurt?

Nov. Ay, faith, without doing his business; for the rogue has been these two years pretending to a wooden leg, which he would take from fortune as kindly as the staff of a marshal of France, and rather read his name in a gazette —

Oliv. Than in the entail of a good estate.

Man. (*aside*). So! —

Nov. I have an ambition, I must confess, of losing my heart before such a fair enemy as yourself, madam; but that silly rogues should be ambitious of losing their arms, and —

Oliv. Looking like a pair of compasses.

Nov. But he has no use of his arms but to set 'em on kimbow, for he never pulls off his hat, at least not to me, I'm sure; for you must know, madam, he has a fanatical hatred to good company: he can't abide me.

L. Plau. Oh, be not so severe to him, as to say he hates good company; for I assure you he has a great respect, esteem, and kindness for me.

Man. (*aside*). That kind, civil rogue has spoken yet ten thousand times worse of me than t'other.

Oliv. Well, if he be returned, Mr. Novel, then shall I be pestered again with his boist'rous sea-love; have my alcove smell like a cabin, my chamber perfumed with his tarpaulin Brandenburgh; and hear volleys of brandy-sighs, enough to make a fog in one's room. Foh! I hate a lover that smells like Thames Street!

Man. (*aside*). I can bear no longer, and need hear no more. — (*To* Olivia.) But since you have these two pulvillio boxes, these essence-bottles, this pair of musk-cats here, I hope I may venture to come yet nearer you.

Oliv. Overheard us then!

Nov. (*aside*). I hope he heard me not.

L. Plau. Most noble and heroic captain, your most obliged, faithful, humble servant.

Nov. Dear tar, thy humble servant.

Man. Away! — Madam —

Oliv. (*Thrusts* Novel *and* Lord Plausible *on each side.*) Nay, I think I have fitted you for list'ning.

Man. You have fitted me for believing you could not be fickle, though you were young; could not dissemble love, though 'twas your interest; nor be vain, though you were handsome; nor break your promise, though to a parting lover; nor abuse your best friend, though you had wit: but I take not your contempt of me worse than your esteem, or civility for these things here, though you know 'em.

Nov. Things!

L. Plau. Let the captain rally a little.

Man. Yes, things! Canst thou be angry, thou thing?

(*Coming up to* Novel.)

Nov. No, since my lord says you speak in raillery; for though your sea-raillery be something rough, yet, I confess, we use one another too as bad every day at Locket's, and never quarrel for the matter.

L. Plau. Nay, noble captain, be not angry with him. — A word with you, I beseech you — (*Whispers to* Manly.)

Oliv. (*aside*). Well, we women, like the rest of the cheats of the world, when our cullies or creditors have found us out, and will or can trust no longer, pay debts and satisfy obligations with a quarrel, the kindest present a man can make to his mistress, when he can make no more presents. For oftentimes in love, as at cards, we are forced to play foul, only to give over the game; and use our lovers like the cards, — when we can get no more by 'em, throw 'em up in a pet upon the first dispute.

Man. My lord, all that you have made me know by your whispering, which I knew not before, is, that you have a stinking breath; there's a secret for your secret.

L. Plau. Pshaw! pshaw!

Man. But, madam, tell me, pray, what was't about this spark could take you? Was it the merit of his fashionable impudence, the briskness of his noise, the wit of his laugh, his judgment, or fancy in his garniture? or was it a well-trimmed glove, or the scent of it, that charmed you?

Nov. Very well, sir; 'gad these sea-captains make nothing of dressing. But let me tell you, sir, a man by his dress, as much as by anything, shows his wit and judgment, nay, and his courage too.

Free. How his courage, Mr. Novel?

Nov. Why, for example, by red breeches, tucked-up hair or peruke, a greasy broad belt, and now-a-days a short sword.

Man. Thy courage will appear more by thy belt than thy sword, I dare swear. — Then, madam, for this gentle piece of courtesy, this man of tame honor, what could you find in him? Was it his languishing affected tone? his mannerly look? his second-hand flattery, the refuse of the playhouse tiring-rooms? or his slavish obsequiousness in watching at the door of your box at the playhouse, for your hand to your chair? or his jaunty way of playing with your fan? or was it the gunpowder spot on his hand, or the jewel in his ear, that purchased your heart?

Oliv. Good jealous captain, no more of your —

L. Plau. No, let him go on, madam, for perhaps he may make you laugh: and I would contribute to your pleasure any way.

Man. Gentle rogue!

Oliv. No, noble captain, you cannot sure think anything could take me more than that heroic title of yours, captain; for you know we women love honor inordinately.

Nov. Ha, ha! faith, she is with thee, bully, for thy raillery.

Man. (*aside to* Novel). Faith, so shall I be with you, no bully, for your grinning.

Oliv. Then, that noble lion-like mien of yours, that soldier-like, weather-beaten complexion, and that manly roughness of your voice; how can they otherwise than charm us women, who hate effeminacy!

Nov. Ha, ha! faith I can't hold from laughing.

Man. (*aside to* Novel). Nor shall I from kicking anon.

Oliv. And then, that captain-like carelessness in your dress, but especially your scarf; 'twas just such another, only a little higher tied, made me in love with my tailor as he passed by my window the last training-day; for we women adore a martial man, and you have nothing wanting to make you more one, or more agreeable, but a wooden leg.

L. Plau. Nay, i'faith, there your ladyship was a wag, and it was fine, just, and well rallied.

Nov. Ay, ay, madam, with you ladies too martial men must needs be very killing.

Man. Peace, you Bartholomew-fair buffoons! and be not you vain that these laugh on your side, for they will laugh at their own dull jests; but no more of 'em, for I will only suffer now this lady to be witty and merry.

Oliv. You would not have your panegyric interrupted. I go on then to your humor. Is there anything more agreeable than the pretty sullenness of that? than the greatness of your courage? which most of all appears in your spirit of contradiction, for you dare give all mankind the lie; and your opinion is your only mistress, for you renounce that too, when it becomes another man's.

Nov. Ha, ha! I cannot hold, I must laugh at thee, tar, faith!

L. Plau. And i'faith, dear captain, I beg your pardon, and leave to laugh at you too, though I protest I mean you no hurt; but when a lady rallies, a stander-by must be complaisant, and do her reason in laughing. Ha, ha!

Man. Why, you impudent, pitiful wretches, you presume sure upon your effeminacy to urge me; for you are in all things so like women, that you may think it in me a kind of cowardice to beat you.

Oliv. No hectoring, good captain.

Man. Or, perhaps, you think this lady's presence secures you; but have a care, she has talked herself out of all the respect I had for her; and by using me ill before you, has given me a privilege of using you so before her: but if you would preserve your respect to her, and not be beaten before her, go, begone immediately.

Nov. Begone! what?

L. Plau. Nay, worthy, noble, generous, captain —

Man. Begone, I say!

Nov. Begone again! to us begone!

Man. No chattering, baboons, instantly begone, or —

(Manly *puts 'em out of the room:* Novel *struts,* Plausible *cringes.*)

Nov. Well, madam, we'll go make the cards ready in your bedchamber: sure you will not stay long with him.

(*Exeunt* Plausible *and* Novel.)

Oliv. Turn hither your rage, good captain Swaggerhuff, and be saucy with your mistress, like a true captain; but be civil to your rivals and betters, and do not threaten anything but me here; no, not so much as my windows; nor do not think yourself in the lodgings of one of your suburb mistresses beyond the Tower.

Man. Do not give me cause to think so; for those less infamous women part with their lovers, just as you did from me, with unforced vows of constancy and floods of willing tears; but the same winds bear away their lovers and their vows: and for their grief, if the credulous unexpected fools return, they find new comforters, fresh cullies, such as I found here. The mercenary love of those women too suffers shipwreck with their gallants' fortunes; now you have heard chance has used me scurvily, therefore you do too. Well, persevere in your ingratitude, falsehood, and disdain; have constancy in something, and I promise you to be as just to your real scorn as I was to your feigned love; and henceforward will despise, contemn, hate, loathe, and detest you most faithfully.

(*Enter* Lettice.)

Oliv. Get the ombre-cards ready in the next room, Lettice, and —

(*Whispers to* Lettice.)

Free. Bravely resolved, captain!

Fid. And you'll be sure to keep your word, I hope, sir.

Man. I hope so too.

Fid. Do you but hope it, sir? If you are not as good as your word, 'twill be the first time you ever bragged, sure.

Man. She has restored my reason with my heart.

Free. But now you talk of restoring, captain, there are other things, which next to one's heart one would not part with; I mean your jewels and money, which it seems she has, sir.

Man. What's that to you, sir?

Free. Pardon me, whatsoever is yours, I have a share in't I'm sure, which I will not lose for asking, though you may be too generous or too angry now to do't yourself.

Fid. Nay, then I'll make bold to make my claim too.

(*Both going towards* Olivia.)

Man. Hold, you impertinent, officious fops — (*Aside.*) How have I been deceived!

Free. Madam, there are certain appurtenances to a lover's heart, called jewels, which always go along with it.

Fid. And which, with lovers, have no value in themselves, but from the heart they come with. Our captain's, madam, it seems you scorn to keep, and much more will those worthless things without it, I am confident.

Oliv. A gentleman so well made as you are may be confident — us easy women could not deny you anything you ask, if 'twere for yourself; but, since 'tis for another, I beg your leave to give him my answer. — (*Aside.*) An agreeable young fellow this! — and would not be my aversion! — (*Aside to* Manly.) Captain, your young friend here has a very persuading face, I confess; yet you might have asked me yourself for those trifles you left with me, which (hark you a little, for I dare trust you with the secret: you are a man of so much honor, I'm sure) — I say then, not expecting your return, or hoping ever to see you again, I have delivered your jewels to —

Man. Whom?

Oliv. My husband.

Man. Your husband!

Oliv. Ay, my husband; for, since you could leave me, I am lately and privately married to one, who is a man of so much honor and experience in the world, that I dare not ask him for your jewels again, to restore 'em to you; lest he should conclude you never would have parted with 'em to me on any other score but the exchange of my honor: which rather than you'd let me lose, you'd lose I'm sure yourself, those trifles of yours.

Man. Triumphant impudence! but married too!

Oliv. Oh, speak not so loud, my servants know it not: I am married; there's no resisting one's destiny, or love, you know.

Man. Why, did you love him too?

Oliv. Most passionately; nay, love him now, though I have married him, and he me: which mutual love I hope you are too good, too generous a man to disturb, by any future claim, or visits to me. 'Tis true, he is now absent in the country, but returns shortly; therefore I beg of you, for your own ease and quiet, and my honor, you will never see me more.

Man. I wish I never had seen you.

Oliv. But if you should ever have

anything to say to me hereafter, let that young gentleman there be your messenger.

MAN. You would be kinder to him; I find he should be welcome.

OLIV. Alas, his youth would keep my husband from suspicions, and his visits from scandal; for we women may have pity for such as he, but no love: and I already think you do not well to spirit him away to sea; and the sea is already but too rich with the spoils of the shore.

MAN. (*aside*). True perfect woman! If I could say anything more injurious to her now, I would; for I could outrail a bilked whore, or a kicked coward; but, now I think on't, that were rather to discover my love than hatred; and I must not talk, for something I must do.

OLIV. (*aside*). I think I have given him enough of me now, never to be troubled with him again. —

([*Re-*]*enter* LETTICE.)

Well, Lettice, are the cards and all ready within? I come then. — Captain, I beg your pardon: you will not make one at ombre?

MAN. No, madam, but I'll wish you a little good luck before you go.

OLIV. No, if you would have me thrive, curse me; for that you'll do heartily, I suppose.

MAN. Then, if you will have it so, may all the curses light upon you, women ought to fear, and you deserve! — First, may the curse of loving play attend your sordid covetousness, and fortune cheat you, by trusting to her, as you have cheated me; the curse of pride, or a good reputation, fall on your lust; the curse of affectation on your beauty; the curse of your husband's company on your pleasures; and the curse of your gallant's disappointments in his absence; and the curse of scorn, jealousy, or despair on your love; and then the curse of loving on!

OLIV. And, to requite all your curses, I will only return you your last; may the curse of loving me still fall upon your proud, hard heart, that could be so cruel to me in these horrid curses! but heaven forgive you! (*Exit* OLIV.)

MAN. Hell and the devil reward thee!

FREE. Well, you see now, mistresses, like friends, are lost by letting 'em handle your money; and most women are such kind of witches, who can have no power over a man, unless you give 'em money; but when once they have got any from you, they never leave you till they have all. Therefore I never give a woman a farthing.

MAN. Well, there is yet this comfort by losing one's money with one's mistress, a man is out of danger of getting another; of being made prize again by love, who, like a pirate, takes you by spreading false colors: but when once you have run your ship a-ground, the treacherous picaroon loots; so by your ruin you save yourself from slavery at least.

(*Enter Boy.*)

BOY. Mrs. Lettice, here's Madam Blackacre come to wait upon her honor. (*Exeunt* LETTICE *and Boy.*)

MAN. D'ye hear that? Let us be gone before she comes; for henceforward I'll avoid the whole damned sex for ever, and woman as a sinking ship.

(*Exeunt* MANLY *and* FIDELIA.)

FREE. And I'll stay, to revenge on her your quarrel to the sex; for out of love to her jointure, and hatred to business, I would marry her, to make an end of her thousand suits, and my thousand engagements, to the comfort of two unfortunate sort of people, my plaintiffs and her defendants, my creditors and her adversaries.

(*Enter* WIDOW BLACKACRE, *led in by* MAJOR OLDFOX, *and* JERRY BLACKACRE *following, laden with green bags.*)

WID. 'Tis an arrant sea-ruffian; but I am glad I met with him at last, to serve him again, major; for the last service was not good in law. Boy, duck, Jerry, where is my paper of memorandums? Give me, child: so. Where is my cousin Olivia now, my kind relation?

FREE. Here is one that would be your kind relation, madam.

WID. What mean you, sir?

FREE. Why, faith, (to be short) to marry you, widow.

Wid. Is not this the wild rude person we saw at Captain Manly's?

Jer. Ay, forsooth, an't please.

Wid. What would you? what are you? Marry me!

Free. Ay, faith; for I am a younger brother, and you are a widow.

Wid. You are an impertinent person; and go about your business.

Free. I have none, but to marry thee, widow.

Wid. But I have other business, I'd have you to know.

Free. But you have no business a-nights, widow; and I'll make you pleasanter business than any you have: for a-nights, I assure you, I am a man of great business; for the business —

Wid. Go, I'm sure you're an idle fellow.

Free. Try me but, widow, and employ me as you find my abilities and industry.

Old. Pray be civil to the lady, Mr. —— she is a person of quality, a person that is no person —

Free. Yes, but she's a person that is a widow. Be you mannerly to her, because you are to pretend only to be her squire, to arm her to her lawyer's chambers; but I will be impudent and bawdy, for she must love and marry me.

Wid. Marry come up, you saucy, familiar Jack! You think, with us widows, 'tis no more than up, and ride. Gad forgive me! now-a-days, every idle, young, hectoring, roaring companion, with a pair of turned red breeches, and a broad back, thinks to carry away any widow of the best degree; but I'd have you to know, sir, all widows are not got, like places at court, by impudence and importunity only.

Old. No, no, soft, soft, you are a young man, and not fit —

Free. For a widow? Yes sure, old man, the fitter.

Old. Go to, go to; if others had not laid in their claims before you —

Free. Not you, I hope.

Old. Why not I, sir? Sure I am a much more proportionable match for her than you, sir; I, who am an elder brother, of a comfortable fortune, and of equal years with her.

Wid. How's that, you unmannerly person? I'd have you to know, I was born but in *Ann' undec' Caroli prim'*.

Old. Your pardon, lady, your pardon; be not offended with your very humble servant. — But I say, sir, you are a beggarly younger brother, twenty years younger than her, without any land or stock, but your great stock of impudence: therefore what pretension can you have to her?

Free. You have made it for me: first, because I am a younger brother.

Wid. Why, is that a sufficient plea to a relict? How appears it, sir? by what foolish custom?

Free. By custom time out of mind only. Then, sir, because I have nothing to keep me after her death, I am the likelier to take care of her life. And for my being twenty years younger than her, and having a sufficient stock of impudence, I leave it to her whether they will be valid exceptions to me in her widow's law or equity.

Old. Well, she has been so long in chancery, that I'll stand to her equity and decree between us. — (*Aside to* Widow Blackacre.) Come, lady, pray snap up this young snap at first, or we shall be troubled with him. Give him a city-widow's answer, that is, with all the ill-breeding imaginable. — Come, madam.

Wid. Well then, to make an end of this foolish wooing, for nothing interrupts business more: first, for you, major —

Old. You declare in my favor, then?

Free. What, direct the court! — (*To* Jerry.) Come, young lawyer, thou sha't be a counsel for me.

Jer. Gad, I shall betray your cause then, as well as an older lawyer; never stir.

Wid. First, I say, for you, major, my walking hospital of an ancient foundation, thou bag of mummy, that wouldst fall asunder, if 'twere not for thy cerecloths —

Old. How, lady?

Free. Ha, ha! —

Jer. Hey, brave mother! use all suitors thus, for my sake.

Wid. Thou withered, hobbling, distorted cripple; nay, thou art a cripple all over: wouldst thou make me the staff of thy age, the crutch of thy decrepidness? Me —

Free. Well said, widow! Faith, thou wouldst make a man love thee now, without dissembling.

Wid. Thou senseless, impertinent, quibbling, drivelling, feeble, paralytic, impotent, fumbling, frigid nincompoop!

Jer. Hey, brave mother, for calling of names, i'fac!

Wid. Wouldst thou make a caudle-maker, a nurse of me? Can't you be bedrid without a bed-fellow? Won't your swan-skins, furs, flannels, and the scorched trencher, keep you warm there? Would you have me your Scotch warming-pan, with a pox to you! Me —

Old. O Heavens!

Free. I told you I should be thought the fitter man, major.

Jer. Ay, you old fobus, and you would have been my guardian, would you, to have taken care of my estate, that half of't should never come to me, by letting long leases at pepper-corn rents?

Wid. If I would have married an old man, 'tis well known I might have married an earl, nay, what's more, a judge, and been covered the winter nights with the lamb-skins, which I prefer to the ermines of nobles. And dost thou think I would wrong my poor minor there for you?

Free. Your minor is a chopping minor, God bless him!

(*Strokes* Jerry *on the head.*)

Old. Your minor may be a major of horse or foot, for his bigness; and it seems you will have the cheating of your minor to yourself.

Wid. Pray, sir, bear witness: cheat my minor! I'll bring my action of the case for the slander.

Free. Nay, I would bear false witness for thee now, widow, since you have done me justice, and have thought me the fitter man for you.

Wid. Fair and softly, sir, 'tis my minor's case, more than my own; and I must do him justice now on you.

Free. How?

Old. So then.

Wid. You are, first, (I warrant) some renegado from the inns of court and the law; and thou'lt come to suffer for't by the law, that is, be hanged.

Jer. Not about your neck, forsooth, I hope.

Free. But, madam —

Old. Hear the court.

Wid. Thou art some debauched, drunken, lewd, hectoring, gaming companion, and want'st some widow's old gold to nick upon; but I thank you, sir, that's for my lawyers.

Free. Faith, we should ne'er quarrel about that; for guineas would serve my turn. But, widow —

Wid. Thou art a foul-mouthed boaster of thy lust, a mere bragadochio of thy strength for wine and women, and wilt belie thyself more than thou dost women, and art every way a base deceiver of women; and would deceive me too, would you?

Free. Nay, faith, widow, this is judging without seeing the evidence.

Wid. I say, you are a worn-out whoremaster at five-and-twenty, both in body and fortune; and cannot be trusted by the common wenches of the town, lest you should not pay 'em; nor by the wives of the town lest you should pay 'em: so you want women, and would have me your bawd to procure 'em for you.

Free. Faith, if you had any good acquaintance, widow, 'twould be civilly done of thee; for I am just come from sea.

Wid. I mean, you would have me keep you, that you might turn keeper; for poor widows are only used like bawds by you: you go to church with us, but to get other women to lie with. In fine, you are a cheating, chousing spendthrift; and having sold your own annuity, would waste my jointure.

Jer. And make havoc of our estate personal, and all our old gilt plate;

I should soon be picking up all our mortgaged apostle-spoons, bowls, and beakers, out of most of the ale-houses betwixt Hercules' Pillars and the Boatswain in Wapping; nay, and you'd be scouring amongst my trees, and make 'em knock down one another, like routed reeling watchmen at midnight. Would you so, bully?

Free. Nay, prithee, widow, hear me.

Wid. No, sir; I'd have you to know, thou pitiful, paltry, lath-backed fellow, if I would have married a young man, 'tis well known I could have had any young heir in Norfolk, nay, the hopefull'st young man this day at the King's-bench bar; I that am a relict and executrix of known plentiful assets and parts, who understand myself and the law. And would you have me under covert-baron again? No, sir, no covert-baron for me.

Free. But, dear widow, hear me. I value you only, not your jointure.

Wid. Nay, sir, hold there; I know your love to a widow is covetousness of her jointure: and a widow, a little striken in years, with a good jointure, is like an old mansion-house in a good purchase, never valued, but take one, take t'other: and perhaps, when you are in possession, you'd neglect it, let it drop to the ground, for want of necessary repairs or expenses upon't.

Free. No, widow, one would be sure to keep all tight, when one is to forfeit one's lease by dilapidation.

Wid. Fie! fie! I neglect my business with this foolish discourse of love. Jerry, child, let me see the list of the jury: I'm sure my cousin Olivia has some relations amongst 'em. But where is she?

Free. Nay, widow, but hear me one word only.

Wid. Nay, sir, no more, pray; I will no more hearken again to your foolish love-motions, than to offers of arbitration.

(*Exeunt* Widow Blackacre *and* Jerry.)

Free. Well, I'll follow thee yet; for he that has a pretension at court, or to a widow, must never give over for a little ill-usage.

Old. Therefore, I'll get her by assiduity, patience, and long sufferings, which you will not undergo; for you idle young fellows leave off love when it comes to be business; and industry gets more women than love.

Free. Ay, industry, the fool's and old man's merit; but I'll be industrious too, and make a business on't, and get her by law, wrangling, and contests, and not by sufferings: and, because you are no dangerous rival, I'll give thee counsel, major:

If you litigious widow e'er would gain,
Sigh not to her, but by the law complain;
To her, as to a bawd, defendant sue
With statutes, and make justice pimp for
you.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT III.

Scene I. — *Westminster Hall.*

(*Enter* Manly *and* Freeman, *two Sailors behind.*)

Man. I hate this place, worse than a man that has inherited a chancery suit: I wish I were well out on't again.

Free. Why, you need not be afraid of this place: for a man without money needs no more fear a crowd of lawyers than a crowd of pickpockets.

Man. This, the reverend of the law would have thought the palace or residence of Justice; but, if it be, she lives here with the state of a Turkish emperor, rarely seen; and besieged rather than defended by her numerous black-guard here.

Free. Methinks 'tis like one of their own halls in Christmas time, whither from all parts fools bring their money, to try by the dice (not the worst judges) whether it shall be their own or no: but after a tedious fretting and wrangling, they drop away all their money on both sides; and, finding neither the better, at last go emptily and lovingly away together to the tavern, joining their curses against the young lawyer's box, that sweeps all, like the old ones.

Man. Spoken like a revelling Christmas lawyer.

Free. Yes, I was one, I confess, but was fain to leave the law, out of conscience, and fall to making false musters: rather choose to cheat the king than his subjects; plunder rather than take fees.

Man. Well, a plague and a purse-famine light on the law; and that female limb of it who dragged me hither to-day! But prithee, go see if, in that crowd of daggled gowns there, (*Pointing to a crowd of Lawyers at the end of the stage,*) thou canst find her. (*Exit* Freeman.)

(*Manet* Manly.)

How hard it is to be an hypocrite!
At least to me, who am but newly so.
I thought it once a kind of knavery,
Nay, cowardice, to hide one's faults; but now
The common frailty, love, becomes my shame.
He must not know I love th' ungrateful still,
Lest he contemn me more than she; for I,
It seems, can undergo a woman's scorn,
But not a man's —

(*Enter to him* Fidelia.)

Fid. Sir, good sir, generous captain.

Man. Prithee, kind impertinence, leave me. Why should'st thou follow me, flatter my generosity now, since thou know'st I have no money left? If I had it I'd give it thee, to buy my quiet.

Fid. I never followed yet, sir, reward or fame, but you alone; nor do I now beg anything but leave to share your miseries. You should not be a niggard of 'em, since, methinks, you have enough to spare. Let me follow you now, because you hate me, as you have often said.

Man. I ever hated a coward's company, I must confess.

Fid. Let me follow you till I am none, then; for you, I'm sure, will [go] through such worlds of dangers, that I shall be inured to 'em; nay, I shall be afraid of your anger more than danger, and so turn valiant out of fear. Dear captain, do not cast me off till you have tried me once more: do not, do not go to sea again without me.

Man. Thou to sea! to court, thou fool; remember the advice I gave thee: thou art a handsome spaniel, and canst fawn naturally: go, busk about, and run thyself into the next great man's lobby; first fawn upon the slaves without, and then run into the lady's bedchamber; thou mayst be admitted, at last, to tumble her bed. Go, seek, I say, and lose me; for I am not able to keep thee; I have not bread for myself.

Fid. Therefore I will not go, because then I may help and serve you.

Man. Thou!

Fid. I warrant you, sir; for, at worst, I could beg or steal for you.

Man. Nay, more bragging! Dost thou not know there's venturing your life in stealing? Go, prithee, away: thou art as hard to shake off as that flattering, effeminating mischief, love.

Fid. Love did you name? Why, you are not so miserable as to be yet in love, sure?

Man. No, no, prithee away, begone, or — (*Aside.*) I had almost discovered my love and shame; well, if I had, that thing could not think the worse of me — or if he did? — no — yes, he shall know it — he shall — but then I must never leave him, for they are such secrets that make parasites and pimps lords of their masters; for any slavery or tyranny is easier than love's. — (*Aloud.*) Come hither. Since thou art so forward to serve me, hast thou but resolution enough to endure the torture of a secret? for such, to some, is insupportable.

Fid. I would keep it as safe as if your dear, precious life depended on't.

Man. Damn your dearness! It concerns more than my life, — my honor.

Fid. Doubt it not, sir.

Man. And do not discover it, by too much fear of discovering it; but have a great care you let not Freeman find it out.

Fid. I warrant you, sir. I am already all joy with the hopes of your commands; and shall be all wings in the execution of 'em: speak quickly, sir.

Man. You said you would beg for me.

Fid. I did, sir.

Man. Then you shall beg for me.

Fid. With all my heart, sir.

Man. That is, pimp for me.

Fid. How, sir?

Man. D'ye start! Think'st thou, thou couldst do me any other service? Come, no dissembling honor: I know you can do it handsomely, thou wert made for't. You have lost your time with me at sea, you must recover it.

Fid. Do not, sir, beget yourself more reasons for your aversion to me, and make my obedience to you a fault; I am the unfittest in the world to do you such a service.

Man. Your cunning arguing against it shows but how fit you are for it. No more dissembling; here, I say, you must go use it for me to Olivia.

Fid. To her, sir?

Man. Go flatter, lie, kneel, promise, anything to get her for me: I cannot live unless I have her. Didst thou not say thou wouldst do anything to save my life? And she said you had a persuading face.

Fid. But did you not say, sir, your honor was dearer to you than your life? And would you have me contribute to the loss of that, and carry love from you to the most infamous, most false, and —

Man. And most beautiful! — (*Sighs aside.*)

Fid. Most ungrateful woman that ever lived; for sure she must be so, that could desert you so soon, use you so basely, and so lately too: do not, do not forget it, sir, and think —

Man. No, I will not forget it, but think of revenge: I will lie with her out of revenge. Go, begone, and prevail for me, or never see me more.

Fid. You scorned her last night.

Man. I know not what I did last night; I dissembled last night.

Fid. Heavens!

Man. Begone, I say, and bring me love or compliance back, or hopes at least, or I'll never see thy face again, by —

Fid. Oh, do not swear, sir! first hear me.

Man. I am impatient, away! you'll find me here till twelve. (*Turns away.*)

Fid. Sir —

Man. Not one word, no insinuating argument more, or soothing persuasion; you'll have need of all your rhetoric with her: go strive to alter her, not me; begone.

(*Exit* Manly *at the end of the stage.*)

(*Manet* Fidelia.)

Fid. Should I discover to him now my sex,
And lay before him his strange cruelty,
'Twould but incense it more. — No, 'tis not time.
For his love must I then betray my own?
Were ever love or chance, till now, severe?
Or shifting women posed with such a task?
Forced to beg that which kills her, if obtained,
And give away her lover not to lose him!

(*Exit* Fidelia.)

(*Enter* Widow Blackacre *in the middle of half-a-dozen Lawyers, whispered to by a fellow in black,* Jerry Blackacre *following the crowd.*)

Wid. Offer me a reference, you saucy companion you! d'ye know who you speak to? Art thou a solicitor in chancery, and offer a reference? A pretty fellow! Mr. Serjeant Ploddon, here's a fellow has the impudence to offer me a reference!

Serj. Plod. Who's that has the impudence to offer a reference within these walls?

Wid. Nay, for a splitter of causes to do't!

Serj. Plod. No, madam; to a lady learned in the law, as you are, the offer of a reference were to impose upon you.

Wid. No, no, never fear me for a reference, Mr. Serjeant. But come, have you not forgot your brief? Are you sure you shan't make the mistake of — hark you — (*Whispers.*) Go then, go to your court of Common-pleas, and say one thing over and over again: you do it so naturally, you'll never be suspected for protracting time.

SERJ. PLOD. Come, I know the course of the court, and your business.

(*Exit* SERJ. PLOD.)

WID. Let's see, Jerry, where are my minutes? Come, Mr. Quaint, pray go talk a great deal for me in chancery; let your words be easy, and your sense hard; my cause requires it: branch it bravely, and deck my cause with flowers, that the snake may lie hidden. Go, go, and be sure you remember the decree of my Lord Chancellor, *Tricesimo quart'* of the queen.

QUAINT. I will, as I see cause, extenuate or examplify matter of fact; baffle truth with impudence; answer exceptions with questions, though never so impertinent; for reasons give 'em words; for law and equity, tropes and figures; and so relax and enervate the sinews of their argument with the oil of my eloquence. But when my lungs can reason no longer, and not being able to say anything more for our cause, say everything of our adversary; whose reputation, though never so clear and evident in the eye of the world, yet with sharp invectives —

WID. Alias, Billingsgate.

QUAINT. With poignant and sour invectives, I say, I will deface, wipe out, and obliterate his fair reputation, even as a record with the juice of lemons; and tell such a story, (for, the truth on't is, all that we can do for our client in chancery, is telling a story,) a fine story, a long story, such a story —

WID. Go, save thy breath for the cause; talk at the bar, Mr. Quaint. You are so copiously fluent, you can weary any one's ears sooner than your own tongue. Go, weary our adversaries' counsel, and the court. Go, thou art a fine-spoken person: adad, I shall make thy wife jealous of me, if you can but court the court into a decree for us. Go, get you gone, and remember — (*Whispers.*) — (*Exit* QUAINT.) — Come, Mr. Blunder, pray bawl soundly for me, at the King's-bench; bluster, sputter, question, cavil; but be sure your argument be intricate enough to confound the court; and then you do my business. Talk what you will, but be sure your tongue never stand still; for your own noise will secure your sense from censure: 'tis like coughing or hemming when one has got the belly-ache, which stifles the unmannerly noise. Go, dear rogue, and succeed; and I'll invite thee, ere it be long, to more soused venison.

BLUND. I'll warrant you, after your verdict, your judgment shall not be arrested upon if's and and's. (*Exit.*)

WID. Come, Mr. Petulant, let me give you some new instructions for our cause in the Exchequer. Are the barons sat?

PET. Yes, no; may be they are, may be they are not: what know I? what care I?

WID. Heyday! I wish you would but snap up the counsel on t'other side anon at the bar as much; and have a little more patience with me, that I might instruct you a little better.

PET. You instruct me! What is my brief for, mistress?

WID. Ay, but you seldom read your brief but at the bar, if you do it then.

PET. Perhaps I do, perhaps I don't, and perhaps 'tis time enough: pray hold yourself contented, mistress.

WID. Nay, if you go there too, I will not be contented, sir; though you, I see, will lose my cause for want of speaking, I wo' not: you shall hear me, and shall be instructed. Let's see your brief.

PET. Send your solicitor to me. Instructed by a woman! I'd have you to know, I do not wear a bar-gown —

WID. By a woman! And I'd have you to know, I am no common woman; but a woman conversant in the laws of the land, as well as yourself, though I have no bar-gown.

PET. Go to, go to, mistress, you are impertinent, and there's your brief for you: instruct me!

(*Flings her breviate at her.*)

WID. Impertinent to me, you saucy Jack, you! You return my breviate, but where's my fee? You'll be sure to keep that, and scan that so well, that if there chance to be but a brass half-crown in't, one's sure to hear on't again: would you would but look on your breviate half so narrowly! But pray give me my fee too, as well as my brief.

Pet. Mistress, that's without precedent. When did a counsel ever return his fee, pray? And you are impertinent, and ignorant, to demand it.

Wid. Impertinent again, and ignorant, to me! Gadsbodikins, you puny upstart in the law, to use me so! you green-bag carrier, you murderer of unfortunate causes, the clerk's ink is scarce off of your fingers, — you that newly come from lamp-blacking the judges' shoes, and are not fit to wipe mine; you call me impertinent and ignorant! I would give thee a cuff on the ear, sitting the courts, if I were ignorant. Marry-gep, if it had not been for me, thou hadst been yet but a hearing counsel at the bar. (*Exit* Petulant.)

(*Enter* Mr. Buttongown, *crossing the stage in haste.*)

Mr. Buttongown, Mr. Buttongown, whither so fast? what, won't you stay till we are heard?

But. I cannot, Mrs. Blackacre, I must be at the council, my lord's cause stays there for me.

Wid. And mine suffers here.

But. I cannot help it.

Wid. I'm undone.

But. What's that to me?

Wid. Consider the five-pound fee, if not my cause: that was something to you.

But. Away, away! pray be not so troublesome, mistress, I must be gone.

Wid. Nay, but consider a little: I am your old client, my lord but a new one; or let him be what he will, he will hardly be a better client to you than myself. I hope you believe I shall be in law as long as I live; therefore am no despicable client. Well, but go to your lord; I know you expect he should make you a judge one day; but I hope his promise to you will prove a true lord's promise. But that he might be sure to fail you, I wish you had his bond for't.

But. But what, will you yet be thus impertinent, mistress?

Wid. Nay, I beseech you, sir, stay; if it be but to tell me my lord's case; come, in short —

But. Nay, then —

(*Exit* Buttongown.)

Wid. Well, Jerry, observe child, and lay it up for hereafter. These are those lawyers who, by being in all causes, are in none; therefore if you would have 'em for you, let your adversary fee 'em; for he may chance to depend upon 'em; and so, in being against thee, they'll be for thee.

Jer. Ay, mother, they put me in mind of the unconscionable wooers of widows, who undertake briskly their matrimonial business for their money; but when they have got it once, let who will drudge for them. Therefore have a care of 'em, forsooth: there's advice for your advice.

Wid. Well said, boy. — Come, Mr. Splitcause, pray go see when my cause in Chancery comes on; and go speak with Mr. Quillit in the King's-bench, and Mr. Quirk in the Common-pleas, and see how our matters go there.

(*Enter* Major Oldfox.)

Old. Lady, a good and propitious morning to you; and may all your causes go as well as if I myself were judge of 'em!

Wid. Sir, excuse me, I am busy, and cannot answer compliments in Westminster Hall. — Go, Mr. Splitcause, and come to me again to that bookseller's; there I'll stay for you, that you may be sure to find me.

Old. No, sir, come to the other bookseller's. I'll attend your ladyship thither.

(*Exit* Splitcause.)

Wid. Why to the other?

Old. Because he is my bookseller, lady.

Wid. What, to sell you lozenges for your catarrh? or medicines for your corns? What else can a major deal with a bookseller for?

Old. Lady, he prints for me.

Wid. Why, are you an author?

Old. Of some few essays; deign you, lady, to peruse 'em. — (*Aside.*) She is a woman of parts, and I must win her by showing mine.

(*The Bookseller's Boy.*)

Boy. Will you see Culpepper, mistress? "Aristotle's Problems?" "The Complete Midwife?"

Wid. No; let's see Dalton, Hughs, Shepherd, Wingate.

B. Boy. We have no law books.

Wid. No? you are a pretty bookseller then.

Old. Come, have you e'er a one of my essays left?

B. Boy. Yes, sir, we have enough, and shall always have 'em.

Old. How so?

B. Boy. Why, they are good, steady, lasting ware.

Old. Nay, I hope they will live; let's see. — Be pleased, madam, to peruse the poor endeavors of my pen; for I have a pen, though I say it, that —

(*Gives her a book.*)

Jer. Pray let me see "St. George for Christendom," or, "The Seven Champions of England."

Wid. No, no; give him "The Young Clerk's Guide." — What, we shall have you read yourself into a humor of rambling and fighting, and studying military discipline, and wearing red breeches!

Old. Nay, if you talk of military discipline, show him my "Treatise of the Art Military."

Wid. Hold; I would as willingly he should read a play.

Jer. Oh, pray forsooth, mother, let me have a play!

Wid. No, sirrah; there are young students of the law enough spoiled already by plays. They would make you in love with your laundress, or, what's worse, some queen of the stage that was a laundress; and so turn keeper before you are of age. (*Several crossing the stage.*) But stay, Jerry, is not that Mr. What d'ye-call-him, that goes there, he that offered to sell me a suit in chancery for five hundred pound, for a hundred down, and only paying the clerk's fees?

Jer. Ay, forsooth, 'tis he.

Wid. Then stay here, and have a care of the bags, whilst I follow him. — Have a care of the bags, I say.

Jer. And do you have a care, forsooth, of the statute against champarty, I say.

(*Exit* Widow Blackacre.)

([*Re-*]*enter* Freeman *to them.*)

Free. (*aside*). So, there's a limb of my widow, which was wont to be inseparable from her: she can't be far. — (*Aloud.*) How now, my pretty son-in-law that shall be, where's my widow?

Jer. My mother, but not your widow, will be forthcoming presently.

Free. Your servant, major. What, are you buying furniture for a little sleeping closet, which you miscall a study? For you do only by your books, as by your wenches, bind 'em up neatly and make 'em fine, for other people to use 'em. And your bookseller is properly your upholsterer, for he furnishes your room, rather than your head.

Old. Well, well, good sea-lieutenant, study you your compass; that's more than your head can deal with. — (*Aside.*) I will go find out the widow, to keep her out of his sight, or he'll board her, whilst I am treating a peace.

(*Exit* Oldfox.)

(*Manent* Freeman, Jerry.)

Jer. Nay, prithee, friend, now let me have but "The Seven Champions." You shall trust me no longer than till my mother's Mr. Splitcause comes; for I hope he'll lend me wherewithal to pay for't.

Free. Lend thee! here, I'll pay him. Do you want money, squire? I'm sorry a man of your estate should want money.

Jer. Nay, my mother will ne'er let me be at age: and till then, she says —

Free. At age! why, you are at age already to have spent an estate, man. There are younger than you have kept their women these three years, have had half a dozen claps, and lost as many thousand pounds at play.

Jer. Ay, they are happy sparks! Nay, I know some of my schoolfellows, who, when we were at school, were two years younger than me; but now, I know not how, are grown men before me, and go where they will, and look to themselves; but my curmudgeonly mother won't allow me wherewithal to be a man of myself with.

Free. Why, there 'tis; I knew your mother was in fault. Ask but your schoolfellows what they did to be men of themselves.

Jer. Why, I know they went to law with their mothers; for they say, there's no good to be done upon a widow mother, till one goes to law with her; but mine is as plaguy a lawyer as any's of our inn. Then would she marry too, and cut down my trees. Now, I should hate, man, to have my father's wife kissed and slapped, and t'other thing too, (you know what I mean) by another man; and our trees are the purest, tall, even, shady twigs, by my fa —

Free. Come, squire, let your mother and your trees fall as she pleases, rather than wear this gown and carry green bags all thy life, and be pointed at for a Tony. But you shall be able to deal with her yet the common way; thou shalt make false love to some lawyer's daughter, whose father, upon the hopes of thy marrying her, shall lend thee money and law to preserve thy estate and trees; and thy mother is so ugly nobody will have her, if she cannot cut down thy trees.

Jer. Nay, if I had but anybody to stand by me, I am as stomachful as another.

Free. That will I: I'll not see any hopeful young gentleman abused.

B. Boy (*aside*). By any but yourself.

Jer. The truth on't is, mine's as arrant a widow-mother to her poor child as any's in England. She won't so much as let one have sixpence in one's pocket to see a motion, or the dancing of the ropes, or —

Free. Come, you shan't want money; there's gold for you.

Jer. O lord, sir, two guineas! D'ye lend me this? Is there no trick in't? Well, sir, I'll give you my bond for security.

Free. No, no; thou hast given me thy face for security: anybody would swear thou dost not look like a cheat. You shall have what you will of me; and if your mother will not be kinder to you, come to me, who will.

Jer. (*aside*). By my fa — he's a curious fine gentleman! — (*Aloud.*) But will you stand by one?

Free. If you can be resolute.

Jer. Can be resolved! Gad, if she gives me but a cross word, I'll leave her to-night, and come to you. But now I have got money, I'll go to Jack-of-all-Trades, at t'other end of the Hall, and buy the neatest, purest things —

Free. (*aside*). And I'll follow the great boy, and my blow at his mother. Steal away the calf, and the cow will follow you.

(*Exit* Jerry, *followed by* Freeman.)

([*Re-*]*enter, on the other side,* Manly, Widow Blackacre, *and* Major Oldfox.)

Man. Damn your cause! can't you lose it without me? which you are like enough to do, if it be, as you say, an honest one: I will suffer no longer for't.

Wid. Nay, captain, I tell you, you are my prime witness; and the cause is just now coming on, Mr. Splitcause tells me. Lord, methinks you should take a pleasure in walking here, as half you see now do; for they have no business here, I assure you.

Man. Yes; but I'll assure you then, their business is to persecute me. But d'ye think I'll stay any longer, to have a rogue, because he knows my name, pluck me aside and whisper a news-book secret to me with a stinking breath? A second come piping angry from the court, and sputter in my face his tedious complaints against it? A third law-coxcomb, because he saw me once at a reader's dinner, come and put me a long law case, to make a discovery of his indefatigable dulness and my wearied patience? A fourth, a most barbarous civil rogue, who will keep a man half an hour in the crowd with a bowed body, and a hat off, acting the reformed sign of the Salutation tavern, to hear his bountiful professions of service and friendship, whilst he cares not if I were damned, and I am wishing him hanged out of my way? — I'd as soon run the gauntlet, as walk t'other turn.

([*Re-*]*enter to them* Jerry Blackacre *without his bags, but laden with trinkets, which he endeavors to hide from his Mother, and followed at a distance by* Freeman.)

Wid. Oh, are you come, sir? But where have you been, you ass? and how came you thus laden?

Jer. Look here, forsooth, mother; now here's a duck, here's a boar-cat, and here's an owl.

(*Making a noise with catcalls and other such like instruments.*)

Wid. Yes, there is an owl, sir.

Old. He's an ungracious bird indeed.

Wid. But go, thou trangame, and carry back those trangames, which thou hast stolen or purloined; for nobody would trust a minor in Westminster Hall, sure.

Jer. Hold yourself contented, forsooth: I have these commodities by a fair bargain and sale; and there stands my witness, and creditor.

Wid. How's that? What, sir, d'ye think to get the mother by giving the child a rattle? — But where are my bags, my writings, you rascal?

Jer. (*aside*). Oh, law! where are they indeed!

Wid. How, sirrah? speak, come —

Man. (*apart to* Free.). You can tell her, Freeman, I suppose.

Free. (*apart to* Man.). 'Tis true, I made one of your salt-water sharks steal 'em whilst he was eagerly choosing his commodities, as he calls 'em, in order to my design upon his mother.

Wid. Won't you speak? Where were you, I say, you son of a — an unfortunate woman? — Oh, major, I'm undone! They are all that concern my estate, my jointure, my husband's deed of gift, my evidences for all my suits now depending! What will become of them?

Free. (*aside*). I'm glad to hear this. — (*Aloud.*) They'll be safe, I warrant you, madam.

Wid. O where? where? Come, you villain, along with me, and show me where.

(*Exeunt* Widow Blackacre, Jerry, *and* Oldfox.)

(*Manent* Manly, Freeman.)

Man. Thou hast taken the right way to get a widow, by making her great boy rebel; for when nothing will make a widow marry, she'll do't to cross her children. But canst thou in earnest marry this harpy, this volume of shrivelled blurred parchments and law, this attorney's desk?

Free. Ay, ay; I'll marry and live honestly: that is, give my creditors, not her, due benevolence, — pay my debts.

Man. Thy creditors, you see, are not so barbarous as to put thee in prison; and wilt thou commit thyself to a noisome dungeon for thy life? which is the only satisfaction thou canst give thy creditors by this match.

Free. Why, is not she rich?

Man. Ay; but he that marries a widow for her money, will find himself as much mistaken as the widow that marries a young fellow for due benevolence, as you call it.

Free. Why, d'ye think I shan't deserve wages? I'll drudge faithfully.

Man. I tell thee again, he that is the slave in the mine has the least propriety in the ore. You may dig, and dig; but if thou wouldst have her money, rather get to be her trustee than her husband; for a true widow will make over her estate to anybody, and cheat herself, rather than be cheated by her children or a second husband.

([*Re-*]*enter to them* Jerry, *running in a fright.*)

Jer. O law! I'm undone, I'm undone! my mother will kill me. — You said you'd stand by one.

Free. So I will, my brave squire, I warrant thee.

Jer. Ay, but I dare not stay till she comes; for she's as furious, now she has lost her writings, as a bitch when she has lost her puppies.

Man. The comparison's handsome!

Jer. Oh, she's here!

(*Re-enter* Widow Blackacre *and* Major Oldfox.)

Free. (*to the Sailor*). Take him, Jack, and make haste with him to your master's lodging; and be sure you keep him up till I come.

(*Exeunt* Jerry *and Sailor.*)

Wid. O my dear writings! Where's this heathen rogue, my minor?

Free. Gone to drown or hang himself.

Wid. No, I know him too well; he'll ne'er be *felo de se* that way: but he may go and choose a guardian of his own head, and so be *felo de ses biens;* for he has not yet chosen one.

Free. (*aside*). Say you so? And he shan't want one.

Wid. But, now I think on't, 'tis you, sir, have put this cheat upon me; for there is a saying, "Take hold of a maid by her smock, and a widow by her writings, and they cannot get from you." But I'll play fast and loose with you yet, if there be law; and my minor and writings are not forthcoming, I'll bring my action of detinue or trover. But first, I'll try to find out this guardianless, graceless villain. — Will you jog, major?

Man. If you have lost your evidence, I hope your causes cannot go on, and I may be gone?

Wid. O no; stay but a making-water while, (as one may say) and I'll be with you again.

(*Exeunt* Widow Blackacre *and* Major Oldfox.)

Free. Well; sure I am the first man that ever began a love-intrigue in Westminster Hall.

Man. No, sure; for the love to a widow generally begins here: and as the widow's cause goes against the heir or executors, the jointure-rivals commence their suit to the widow.

Free. Well; but how, pray, have you passed your time here, since I was forced to leave you alone? You have had a great deal of patience.

Man. Is this a place to be alone, or have patience in? But I have had patience indeed; for I have drawn upon me, since I came, but three quarrels and two lawsuits.

Free. Nay, faith, you are too cursed to be let loose in the world; you should be tied up again in your sea-kennel, called a ship. But how could you quarrel here?

Man. How could I refrain? A lawyer talked peremptorily and saucily to me, and as good as gave me the lie.

Free. They do it so often to one another at the bar, that they make no bones on't elsewhere.

Man. However, I gave him a cuff on the ear; whereupon he jogs two men, whose backs were turned to us, (for they were reading at a bookseller's) to witness I struck him, sitting the courts; which office they so readily promised, that I called 'em rascals and knights of the post. One of 'em presently calls two other absent witnesses, who were coming towards us at a distance; whilst the other, with a whisper, desires to know my name, that he might have satisfaction by way of challenge, as 'tother by way of writ; but if it were not rather to direct his brother's writ, than his own challenge. — There, you see, is one of my quarrels, and two of my lawsuits.

Free. So! — and the other two?

Man. For advising a poet to leave off writing, and turn lawyer, because he is dull and impudent, and says or writes nothing now but by precedent.

Free. And the third quarrel?

Man. For giving more sincere advice to a handsome, well-dressed young fellow, (who asked it too) not to marry a wench that he loved, and I had lain with.

Free. Nay, if you will be giving your sincere advice to lovers and poets, you will not fail of quarrels.

Man. Or, if I stay in this place; for I see more quarrels crowding upon me. Let's be gone, and avoid 'em.

(*Enter* Novel *at a distance, coming towards them.*)

A plague on him, that sneer is ominous to us; he is coming upon us, and we shall not be rid of him.

Nov. Dear bully, don't look so grum upon me; you told me just now, you had forgiven me a little harmless raillery upon wooden legs last night.

Man. Yes, yes, pray begone, I am talking of business.

Nov. Can't I hear it? I love thee, and will be faithful, and always —

Man. Impertinent! 'Tis business that concerns Freeman only.

Nov. Well, I love Freeman too, and would not divulge his secret. — Prithee speak, prithee, I must —

Man. Prithee let me be rid of thee, I must be rid of thee.

Nov. Faith, thou canst hardly, I love thee so. Come, I must know the business.

Man. (*aside*). So, I have it now. — (*Aloud.*) Why, if you needs will know it, he has a quarrel, and his adversary bids him bring two friends with him: now, I am one, and we are thinking who we shall have for a third.

(*Several crossing the stage.*)

Nov. A pox, there goes a fellow owes me an hundred pound, and goes out of town to-morrow: I'll speak with him, and come to you presently. (*Exit* Novel.)

Man. No, but you won't.

Free. You are dext'rously rid of him.

([*Re-*]*enter* Major Oldfox.)

Man. To what purpose, since here comes another as impertinent? I know by his grin he is bound hither.

Old. Your servant, worthy, noble captain. Well, I have left the widow, because she carried me from your company: for, faith, captain, I must needs tell thee thou art the only officer in England, who was not an Edgehill officer, that I care for.

Man. I'm sorry for't.

Old. Why, wouldst thou have me love them?

Man. Anybody, rather than me.

Old. What! you are modest, I see; therefore, too, I love thee.

Man. No, I am not modest, but love to brag myself, and can't patiently hear you fight over the last civil war; therefore, go look out the fellow I saw just now here, that walks with his stockings and sword out at heels, and let him tell you the history of that scar on his cheek, to give you occasion to show yours, got in the field at Bloomsbury, not that of Edgehill. Go to him, poor fellow, he is fasting, and has not yet the happiness this morning to stink of brandy and tobacco: go, give him some to hear you; I am busy.

Old. Well, egad, I love thee now, boy, for thy surliness: thou art no tame captain, I see, that will suffer —

Man. An old fox.

Old. All that shan't make me angry: I consider that thou art peevish, and fretting at some ill success at law. Prithee, tell me what ill luck you have met with here.

Man. You.

Old. Do I look like the picture of ill luck? Gadsnouns, I love thee more and more. And shall I tell thee what made me love thee first?

Man. Do; that I may be rid of that damned quality and thee.

Old. 'Twas thy wearing that broad sword there.

Man. Here, Freeman, let's change: I'll never wear it more.

Old. How! you won't, sure. Prithee, don't look like one of our holiday captains now-a-days, with a bodkin by your side, your martinet rogues.

Man. (*aside*). Oh, then there's hopes. — (*Aloud.*) What, d'ye find fault with martinet? Let me tell you, sir, 'tis the best exercise in the world; the most ready, most easy, most graceful exercise that ever was used, and the most —

Old. Nay, nay, sir, no more; sir, your servant: if you praise martinet once, I have done with you, sir. — Martinet! martinet! — (*Exit* Oldfox.)

Free. Nay, you have made him leave you as willingly as ever he did an enemy; for he was truly for the king and parliament: for the parliament, in their list; and for the king, in cheating 'em of their pay, and never hurting the king's party in the field.

(*Enter a Lawyer towards them.*)

Man. A pox! this way; here's a lawyer I know threat'ning us with another greeting.

Law. Sir, sir, your very servant; I was afraid you had forgotten me.

Man. I was not afraid you had forgotten me.

Law. No, sir; we lawyers have pretty good memories.

Man. You ought to have, by your wits.

Law. Oh, you are a merry gentleman, sir; I remember you were merry when I was last in your company.

Man. I was never merry in thy company, Mr. Lawyer, sure.

Law. Why, I'm sure you joked upon me, and shammed me all night long.

Man. Shammed! prithee, what barbarous law-term is that?

Law. Shamming! Why, don't you know that? 'tis all our way of wit, sir.

Man. I am glad I do not know it then. Shamming! What does he mean by't, Freeman!

Free. Shamming is telling you an insipid dull lie with a dull face, which the sly wag the author only laughs at himself; and making himself believe 'tis a good jest, puts the sham only upon himself.

Man. So, your lawyer's jest, I find, like his practice, has more knavery than wit in't. I should make the worst shammer in England: I must always deal ingenuously, as I will with you, Mr. Lawyer, and advise you to be seen rather with attorneys and solicitors, than such fellows as I am; they will credit your practice more.

Law. No, sir, your company's an honor to me.

Man. No, faith; go this way, there goes an attorney; leave me for him; let it be never said a lawyer's civility did him hurt.

Law. No, worthy, honored sir; I'll not leave you for any attorney, sure.

Man. Unless he had a fee in his hand.

Law. Have you any business here, sir? Try me: I'd serve you sooner than any attorney breathing.

Man. Business! — (*Aside.*) So, I have thought of a sure way. — (*Aloud.*) Yes, faith, I have a little business.

Law. Have you so, sir? in what court, sir? what is't, sir? Tell me but how I may serve you, and I'll do't, sir, and take it for as great an honor —

Man. Faith, 'tis for a poor orphan of a sea officer of mine, that has no money; but if it could be followed in *forma pauperis*, and when the legacy's recovered —

Law. *Forma pauperis*, sir!

Man. Ay, sir.

(*Several crossing the stage.*)

Law. Mr. Bumblecase, Mr. Bumblecase! a word with you. — Sir, I beg your pardon at present; I have a little business —

Man. Which is not in *forma pauperis*.

(*Exit Lawyer.*)

Free. So, you have now found a way to be rid of people without quarrelling?

(*Enter Alderman.*)

Man. But here's a city rogue will stick as hard upon us, as if I owed him money.

Ald. Captain, noble sir, I am yours heartily, d'ye see; why should you avoid your old friends?

Man. And why should you follow me? I owe you nothing.

Ald. Out of my hearty respects to you; for there is not a man in England —

Man. Thou wouldst save from hanging with the expense of a shilling only.

Ald. Nay, nay, but, captain, you are like enough to tell me —

Man. Truth, which you won't care to hear; therefore you had better go talk with somebody else.

Ald. No, I know nobody can inform me better of some young wit, or spendthrift, that has a good dipped seat and estate in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Essex, or Kent, any of these would serve my turn: now, if you knew of such an one, and would but help —

Man. You to finish his ruin.

Ald. I'faith, you should have a snip —

Man. Of your nose, you thirty-in-the-hundred rascal; would you make me your squire setter, your bawd for manors?

(*Takes him by the nose.*)

Ald. Oh!

Free. Hold, or here will be your third law-suit.

Ald. Gads-precious, you hectoring person you, are you wild? I meant you no hurt, sir: I begin to think, as things go, land-security best, and have, for a convenient mortgage, some ten, fifteen, or twenty thousand pound by me.

Man. Then go lay it out upon an hospital, and take a mortgage of Heaven, according to your city custom; for you think, by laying out a little money, to hook in that too hereafter. Do, I say, and keep the poor you've made by taking forfeitures, that Heaven may not take yours.

Ald. No, to keep the cripples you make this war. This war spoils our trade.

Man. Damn your trade! 'tis the better for't.

Ald. What, will you speak against our trade?

Man. And dare you speak against the war, our trade?

Ald. (*aside*). Well, he may be a convoy of ships I am concerned in. — (*Aloud.*) Come, captain, I will have a fair correspondency with you, say what you will.

Man. Then prithee be gone.

Ald. No, faith; prithee, captain, let's go drink a dish of laced coffee, and talk of the times. Come, I'll treat you: nay, you shall go, for I have no business here.

Man. But I have.

Ald. To pick up a man to give thee a dinner? Come, I'll do thy business for thee.

Man. Faith, now I think on't, so you may, as well as any man; for 'tis to pick up a man to be bound with me, to one who expects city security for —

Ald. Nay, then your servant, captain; business must be done.

Man. Ay, if it can; but hark you, alderman, without you —

Ald. Business, sir, I say, must be done; and there's an officer of the treasury (*Several crossing the stage.*) I have an affair with —

(*Exit Alderman.*)

Man. You see now what the mighty friendship of the world is; what all ceremony, embraces, and plentiful professions come to! You are no more to believe a professing friend than a threat'ning enemy; and as no man hurts you, that tells you he'll do you a mischief, no man, you see, is your servant, who says he is so. Why the devil, then, should a man be troubled with the flattery of knaves, if he be not a fool or cully; or with the fondness of fools, if he be not a knave or cheat?

Free. Only for his pleasure; for there is some in laughing at fools, and disappointing knaves.

Man. That's a pleasure, I think, would cost you too dear, as well as marrying your widow to disappoint her; but, for my part, I have no pleasure by 'em but in despising 'em, wheresoe'er I meet 'em; and then the pleasure of hoping so to be rid of 'em. But now my comfort is, I am not worth a shilling in the world, which all the world shall know; and then I'm sure I shall have none of 'em come near me.

Free. A very pretty comfort, which I think you pay too dear for. — But is the twenty pound gone since the morning?

Man. To my boat's crew. — Would you have the poor, honest, brave fellows want?

Free. Rather than you or I.

Man. Why, art thou without money? thou who art a friend to everybody?

Free. I ventured my last stake upon the squire to nick him of his mother; and cannot help you to a dinner, unless you will go dine with my lord —

Man. No, no; the ordinary is too dear for me, where flattery must pay for my dinner: I am no herald, or poet.

Free. We'll go then to the bishop's —

Man. There you must flatter the old philosophy: I cannot renounce my reason for a dinner.

Free. Why, then let's go to your alderman's.

Man. Hang him, rogue! that were not to dine; for he makes you drunk with lees of sack before dinner, to take away your stomach: and there you must call usury and extortion God's blessings, or the honest turning of the penny; hear him brag of the leather breeches in which he trotted first to town, and make a greater noise with his money in his parlor, than his cashiers do in his counting-house, without hopes of borrowing a shilling.

Free. Ay, a pox on't! 'tis like dining with the great gamesters; and when they fall to their common dessert, to see the heaps of gold drawn on all hands, without going to twelve. Let us go to my Lady Goodly's.

Man. There, to flatter her looks, you must mistake her grandchildren for her own; praise her cook, that she may rail at him; and feed her dogs, not yourself.

Free. What d'ye think of eating with your lawyer, then?

Man. Eat with him! damn him! To hear him employ his barbarous eloquence in a reading upon the two-and-thirty good bits in a shoulder of veal, and be forced yourself to praise the cold bribe-pie that stinks, and drink law-French wine as rough and harsh as his law-French. A pox on him! I'd rather dine in the Temple-rounds or walks, with the knights without noses, or the knights of the post, who are honester fellows, and better company. But let us home and try our fortune; for I'll stay no longer here for your damned widow.

Free. Well, let us go home then; for I must go for my damned widow, and look after my new damned charge. Three or four hundred years ago a man might have dined in this Hall.

Man. But now the lawyer only here is fed;
And, bully-like, by quarrels gets his bread.
(*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

Scene I. — Manly's *Lodging.*

(*Enter* Manly *and* Fidelia.)

Man. Well, there's success in thy face. Hast thou prevailed? say.

Fid. As I could wish, sir.

Man. So; I told thee what thou wert fit for, and thou wouldst not believe me. Come, thank me for bringing thee acquainted with thy genius. Well, thou hast mollified her heart for me?

Fid. No, sir, not so; but what's better.

Man. How? what's better!

Fid. I shall harden your heart against her.

Man. Have a care, sir; my heart is too much in earnest to be fooled with, and my desire at height, and needs no delays to incite it. What, you are too good a pimp already, and know how to endear pleasure by withholding it? But leave off your page's bawdy-house tricks, sir, and tell me, will she be kind?

Fid. Kinder than you could wish, sir.

Man. So, then: well, prithee, what said she?

Fid. She said —

Man. What? thou'rt so tedious: speak comfort to me; what?

Fid. That of all things you are her aversion.

Man. How!

Fid. That she would sooner take a bedfellow out of an hospital, and diseases, into her arms, than you.

Man. What?

Fid. That she would rather trust her honor with a dissolute debauched hector, nay worse, with a finical baffled coward, all over loathsome with affectation of the fine gentleman.

Man. What's all this you say?

Fid. Nay, that my offers of your love to her were more offensive, than when parents woo their virgin-daughters to the enjoyment of riches only; and that you were in all circumstances as nauseous to her as a husband on compulsion.

Man. Hold! I understand you not.

Fid. (*aside*). So, 'twill work, I see.

Man. Did you not tell me —

Fid. She called you ten thousand ruffians.

Man. Hold, I say.

Fid. Brutes —

Man. Hold.

Fid. Sea-monsters —

Man. Damn your intelligence! Hear me a little now.

Fid. Nay, surly coward she called you too.

Man. Won't you hold yet? Hold, or —

Fid. Nay, sir, pardon me; I could not but tell you she had the baseness, the injustice, to call you coward, sir; coward, coward, sir.

Man. Not yet? —

Fid. I've done. — Coward, sir.

Man. Did not you say, she was kinder than I could wish her?

Fid. Yes, sir.

Man. How then? — O — I understand you now. At first she appeared in rage and disdain, the truest sign of a coming woman; but at last you prevailed, it seems: did you not?

Fid. Yes, sir.

Man. So then, let's know that only; come, prithee, without delays. I'll kiss thee for that news beforehand.

Fid. (*aside*). So; the kiss I'm sure is welcome to me, whatsoe'er the news will be to you.

Man. Come, speak, my dear volunteer.

Fid. (*aside*). How welcome were that kind word too, if it were not for another woman's sake!

Man. What, won't you speak? You prevailed for me at last, you say?

Fid. No, sir.

Man. No more of your fooling, sir: it will not agree with my impatience or temper.

Fid. Then not to fool you, sir, I spoke to her for you, but prevailed for myself; she would not hear me when I spoke in your behalf, but bid me say what I would in my own, though she gave me no occasion, she was so coming, and so was kinder, sir, than you could wish; which I was only afraid to let you know, without some warning.

Man. How's this? Young man, you are of a lying age; but I must hear you out, and if —

Fid. I would not abuse you, and cannot wrong her by any report of her, she is so wicked.

Man. How, wicked! had she the impudence, at the second sight of you only —

Fid. Impudence, sir! oh, she has impudence enough to put a court out of countenance, and debauch a stews.

Man. Why, what said she?

Fid. Her tongue, I confess, was silent; but her speaking eyes gloated such things, more immodest and lascivious than ravishers can act, or women under a confinement think.

Man. I know there are [those] whose eyes reflect more obscenity than the glasses in alcoves; but there are others too who use a little art with their looks, to make 'em seem more beautiful, not more loving; which vain young fellows like you are apt to interpret in their own favor, and to the lady's wrong.

Fid. Seldom, sir. Pray, have you a care of gloating eyes; for he that loves to gaze upon 'em, will find at last a thousand fools and cuckolds in 'em instead of cupids.

Man. Very well, sir. — But what, you had only eye-kindness from Olivia?

Fid. I tell you again, sir, no woman sticks there; eye-promises of love they only keep; nay, they are contracts which make you sure of 'em. In short, sir, she, seeing me, with shame and amazement dumb, unactive, and resistless, threw her twisting arms about my neck, and smothered me with a thousand tasteless kisses. Believe me, sir, they were so to me.

Man. Why did you not avoid 'em then?

Fid. I fenced with her eager arms, as you did with the grapples of the enemy's fireship; and nothing but cutting 'em off could have freed me.

Man. Damned, damned woman, that could be so false and infamous! and damned, damned heart of mine, that cannot yet be false, though so infamous! What easy, tame, suffering, trampled things does that little god of talking cowards make of us! but —

FID. (*aside*). So! it works, I find, as I expected.

MAN. But she was false to me before, she told me so herself, and yet I could not quite believe it; but she was, so that her second falseness is a favor to me, not an injury, in revenging me upon the man that wronged me first of her love. Her love! — a whore's, a witch's love! — But what, did she not kiss well, sir? — I'm sure I thought her lips — but I must not think of 'em more — but yet they are such I could still kiss — grow to — and then tear off with my teeth, grind 'em into mammocks, and spit 'em into her cuckold's face.

FID. (*aside*). Poor man, how uneasy he is! I have hardly the heart to give so much pain, though withal I give him a cure, and to myself new life.

MAN. But what, her kisses sure could not but warm you into desire at last, or a compliance with hers at least?

FID. Nay, more, I confess —

MAN. What more? speak.

FID. All you could fear had passed between us, if I could have been made to wrong you, sir, in that nature.

MAN. Could have been made! you lie, you did.

FID. Indeed, sir, 'twas impossible for me; besides, we were interrupted by a visit; but I confess, she would not let me stir, till I promised to return to her again within this hour, as soon as it should be dark; by which time she would dispose of her visit, and her servants, and herself, for my reception: which I was fain to promise, to get from her.

MAN. Ha!

FID. But if ever I go near her again, may you, sir, think me as false to you, as she is; hate and renounce me, as you ought to do her, and, I hope, will do now.

MAN. Well, but now I think on't, you shall keep your word with your lady. What, a young fellow, and fail the first, nay, so tempting an assignation!

FID. How, sir?

MAN. I say, you shall go to her when 'tis dark, and shall not disappoint her.

FID. I, sir! I should disappoint her more by going; for —

MAN. How so?

FID. Her impudence and injustice to you will make me disappoint her love, loathe her.

MAN. Come, you have my leave; and if you disgust her, I'll go with you, and act love, whilst you shall talk it only.

FID. You, sir! nay, then I'll never go near her. You act love, sir! You must but act it indeed, after all I have said to you. Think of your honor, sir, love! —

MAN. Well, call it revenge, and that is honorable: I'll be revenged on her; and thou shalt be my second.

FID. Not in a base action, sir, when you are your own enemy. O go not near her, sir; for Heaven's sake, for your own, think not of it!

MAN. How concerned you are! I thought I should catch you. What, you are my rival at last, and are in love with her yourself; and have spoken ill of her out of your love to her, not me; and therefore would not have me go to her!

FID. Heaven witness for me, 'tis because I love you only, I would not have you go to her.

MAN. Come, come, the more I think on't, the more I'm satisfied you do love her. Those kisses, young man, I knew were irresistible; 'tis certain.

FID. There is nothing certain in the world, sir, but my truth and your courage.

MAN. Your servant, sir. Besides, false and ungrateful as she has been to me, and though I may believe her hatred to me great as you report it, yet I cannot think you are so soon and at that rate beloved by her, though you may endeavor it.

FID. Nay, if that be all, and you doubt it still, sir, I will conduct you to her; and, unseen, your ears shall judge of her falseness, and my truth to you, if that will satisfy you.

MAN. Yes, there is some satisfaction in

being quite out of doubt; because 'tis that alone withholds us from the pleasure of revenge.

Fid. Revenge! What revenge can you have, sir? Disdain is best revenged by scorn; and faithless love, by loving another and making her happy with the other's losings: which, if I might advise —

(*Enter* Freeman.)

Man. Not a word more.

Free. What, are you talking of love yet, captain? I thought you had done with't.

Man. Why, what did you hear me say?

Free. Something imperfectly of love, I think.

Man. I was only wondering why fools, rascals, and desertless wretches, should still have the better of men of merit with all women, as much as with their own common mistress, Fortune.

Free. Because most women, like Fortune, are blind, seem to do all things in jest, and take pleasure in extravagant actions. Their love deserves neither thanks, or blame, for they cannot help it: 'tis all sympathy; therefore, the noisy, the finical, the talkative, the cowardly, and effeminate, have the better of the brave, the reasonable, and man of honor; for they have no more reason in their love, or kindness, than Fortune herself.

Man. Yes, they have their reason. First, honor in a man they fear too much to love; and sense in a lover upbraids their want of it; and they hate anything that disturbs their admiration of themselves; but they are of that vain number, who had rather show their false generosity, in giving away profusely to worthless flatterers, than in paying just debts. And, in short, all women, like fortune (as you say) and rewards, are lost by too much meriting.

Fid. All women, sir! sure there are some who have no other quarrel to a lover's merit, but that it begets their despair of him.

Man. Thou art young enough to be credulous; but we —

(*Enter first Sailor.*)

1st Sail. Here are now below, the scolding daggled gentlewoman, and that Major Old — Old — Fop, I think you call him.

Free. Oldfox: — prithee bid 'em come up, with your leave, captain, for now I can talk with her upon the square, if I shall not disturb you. (*Exit Sailor.*)

Man. No; for I'll begone. Come, volunteer.

Free. Nay, pray stay; the scene between us will not be so tedious to you as you think. Besides, you shall see how I have rigged my 'squire out, with the remains of my shipwrecked wardrobe; he is under your sea valet-de-chambre's hands, and by this time dressed, and will be worth your seeing. Stay, and I'll fetch my fool.

Man. No; you know I cannot easily laugh; besides, my volunteer and I have business abroad.

(*Exeunt* Manly *and* Fidelia *on one side;* Freeman *on t'other.*)

(*Enter* Major Oldfox *and* Widow Blackacre.)

Wid. What, nobody here! Did not the fellow say he was within?

Old. Yes, lady; and he may be perhaps a little busy at present; but if you think the time long till he comes, (*unfolding papers*) I'll read you here some of the fruits of my leisure, the overflowings of my fancy and pen. — (*Aside.*) To value me right, she must know my parts. — (*Aloud.*) Come —

Wid. No, no; I have reading work enough of my own in my bag, I thank you.

Old. Ay, law, madam; but here is a poem, in blank verse, which I think a handsome declaration of one's passion.

Wid. Oh, if you talk of declarations, I'll show you one of the prettiest penned things, which I mended too myself, you must know.

Old. Nay, lady, if you have used yourself so much to the reading of harsh law, that you hate smooth poetry, here is a character for you, of —

Wid. A character! Nay, then I'll show you my bill in chancery here, that gives you such a character of my adversary, makes him as black —

Old. Pshaw! away, away, lady! But if you think the character too long, here is an epigram, not above twenty lines, upon a cruel lady, who decreed her servant should hang himself, to demonstrate his passion.

Wid. Decreed! if you talk of decreeing, I have such a decree here, drawn by the finest clerk —

Old. O lady, lady, all interruption, and no sense between us, as if we were lawyers at the bar! But I had forgot, Apollo and Littleton never lodge in a head together. If you hate verses, I'll give you a cast of my politics in prose. 'Tis "a Letter to a Friend in the Country;" which is now the way of all such sober, solid persons as myself, when they have a mind to publish their disgust to the times; though perhaps, between you and I, they have no friend in the country. And sure a politic, serious person may as well have a feigned friend in the country to write to, as well as an idle poet a feigned mistress to write to. And so here's my letter to a friend, or no friend, in the country, concerning the late conjuncture of affairs, in relation to coffee-houses; or "The Coffee-man's Case."

Wid. Nay, if your letter have a case in't, 'tis something; but first I'll read you a letter of mine, to a friend in the country, called a letter of attorney.

([*Re*]-*enter to them* Freeman *and* Jerry Blackacre *in an old gaudy suit and red breeches of* Freeman's.)

Old. (*aside*). What, interruption still! O the plague of interruption! worse to an author than the plague of critics.

Wid. What's this I see? Jerry Blackacre, my minor, in red breeches! What, hast thou left the modest, seemly garb of gown and cap for this? and have I lost all my good inns-of-chancery breeding upon thee then? and thou wilt go a-breeding thyself from our inn of chancery and Westminster Hall, at coffee-houses, and ordinaries, play-houses, tennis-courts, and bawdy-houses?

Jer. Ay, ay, what then? perhaps I will; but what's that to you? Here's my guardian and tutor now, forsooth, that I am out of your huckster's hands.

Wid. How! thou hast not chosen him for thy guardian yet?

Jer. No, but he has chosen me for his charge, and that's all one; and I'll do anything he'll have me, and go all the world over with him; to ordinaries, and bawdy-houses, or anywhere else.

Wid. To ordinaries and bawdy-houses! have a care, minor, thou wilt enfeeble there thy estate and body: do not go to ordinaries and bawdy-houses, good Jerry.

Jer. Why, how come you to know any ill by bawdy-houses? You never had any hurt by 'em, had you, forsooth? Pray hold yourself contented; if I do go where money and wenches are to be had, you may thank yourself; for you used me so unnaturally, you would never let me have a penny to go abroad with; nor so much as come near the garret where your maidens lay; nay, you would not so much as let me play at hotcockles with 'em, nor have any recreation with 'em though one should have kissed you behind, you were so unnatural a mother, so you were.

Free. Ay, a very unnatural mother, faith, squire.

Wid. But, Jerry, consider thou art yet but a minor; however, if thou wilt go home with me again, and be a good child, thou shalt see —

Free. Madam, I must have a better care of my heir under age, than so; I would sooner trust him alone with a stale waiting-woman and a parson, than with his widow-mother and her lover or lawyer.

Wid. Why, thou villain, part mother and minor! rob me of my child and my writings! but thou shalt find there's law; and as in the case of ravishment of guard — Westminster the Second.

Old. Young gentleman squire, pray be ruled by your mother and your friends.

Jer. Yes, I'll be ruled by my friends, therefore not by my mother, so I won't: I'll choose him for my guardian till I am of age; nay, maybe, for as long as I live.

Wid. Wilt thou so, thou wretch? and when thou'rt of age, thou wilt sign, seal, and deliver too, wilt thou?

Jer. Yes, marry will I, if you go there too.

Wid. O do not squeeze wax, son; rather go to ordinaries and bawdy-houses, than squeeze wax. If thou dost that, farewell the goodly manor of Blackacre, with all its woods, underwoods, and appurtenances whatever! Oh, oh! (*Weeps.*)

Free. Come, madam, in short, you see I am resolved to have a share in the estate, yours or your son's; if I cannot get you, I'll keep him, who is less coy, you find; but if you would have your son again, you must take me too. Peace or war? love or law? You see my hostage is in my hand: I'm in possession.

Wid. Nay, if one of us must be ruined, e'en let it be him. By my body, a good one! Did you ever know yet a widow marry or not marry for the sake of her child? I'd have you to know, sir, I shall be hard enough for you both yet, without marrying you, if Jerry won't be ruled by me. What say you, booby, will you be ruled? speak.

Jer. Let one alone, can't you?

Wid. Wilt thou choose him for guardian, whom I refuse for husband?

Jer. Ay, to choose, I thank you.

Wid. And are all my hopes frustrated? Shall I never hear thee put cases again to John the butler, or our vicar? never see thee amble the circuit with the judges; and hear thee, in our town-hall, louder than the crier?

Jer. No, for I have taken my leave of lawyering and pettifogging.

Wid. Pettifogging! thou profane villain, hast thou so? Pettifogging! — then you shall take your leave of me, and your estate too; thou shalt be an alien to me and it forever. Pettifogging!

Jer. Oh, but if you go there too, mother, we have the deeds and settlements, I thank you. Would you cheat me of my estate, i'fac?

Wid. No, no, I will not cheat your little brother Bob; for thou wert not born in wedlock.

Free. How's that?

Jer. How? What quirk has she got in her head now?

Wid. I say thou canst not, shalt not inherit the Blackacres' estate.

Jer. Why? Why, forsooth? What d'ye mean, if you go there too?

Wid. Thou art but my base child; and according to the law, canst not inherit it. Nay, thou art not so much as bastard eigne.

Jer. What, what? Am I then the son of a whore, mother?

Wid. The law says —

Free. Madam, we know what the law says; but have a care what you say. Do not let your passion, to ruin your son, ruin your reputation.

Wid. Hang reputation, sir! am not I a widow? have no husband, nor intend to have any? Nor would you, I suppose, now have me for a wife. So I think now I'm revenged on my son and you, without marrying, as I told you.

Free. But consider, madam.

Jer. What, have you no shame left in you, mother?

Wid. (*aside to* Oldfox). Wonder not at it, major. 'Tis often the poor pressed widow's case, to give up her honor to save her jointure; and seem to be a light woman, rather than marry: as some young men, they say, pretend to have the filthy disease, and lose their credit with most women, to avoid the importunities of some.

Free. But one word with you, madam.

Wid. No, no, sir. Come, major, let us make haste now to the Prerogative-court.

Old. But, lady, if what you say be true, will you stigmatise your reputation on record? and if it be not true, how will you prove it?

Wid. Pshaw! I can prove anything; and for my reputation, know, major, a wise woman will no more value her reputation in disinheriting a rebellious son of a good estate, than she would in getting him, to inherit an estate.

(*Exeunt* WIDOW BLACKACRE *and* MAJOR OLDFOX.)

FREE. Madam. — We must not let her go so, squire.

JER. Nay, the devil can't stop her though, if she has a mind to't. But come, bully-guardian, we'll go and advise with three attorneys, two proctors, two solicitors, and a shrewd man of Whitefriars, neither attorney, proctor, or solicitor, but as pure a pimp to the law as any of 'em; and sure all they will be hard enough for her, for I fear bully-guardian, you are too good a joker to have any law in your head.

FREE. Thou'rt in the right on't, squire; I understand no law; especially that against bastards, since I'm sure the custom is against that law, and more people get estates by being so, than lose 'em.

(*Exeunt.*)

[SCENE II.] — OLIVIA'S *Lodging.*

(*Enter* Lord PLAUSIBLE *and Boy with a candle.*)

L. PLAU. Little gentleman, your most obedient, faithful, humble servant. Where, I beseech you, is that divine person, your noble lady?

BOY. Gone out, my lord; but commanded me to give you this letter.

(*Gives him a letter.*)

(*Enter to him* NOVEL.)

L. PLAU. (*aside*). Which he must not observe. — (*Puts it up.*)

NOV. Hey, boy, where is thy lady?

BOY. Gone out, sir; but I must beg a word with you.

(*Gives him a letter, and exit.*)

NOV. For me? So. — (*Puts up the letter.*) Servant, servant, my lord; you see the lady knew of your coming, for she is gone out.

L. PLAU. Sir, I humbly beseech you not to censure the lady's good breeding: she has reason to use more liberty with me than with any other man.

NOV. How, viscount, how?

L. PLAU. Nay, I humbly beseech you, be not in choler; where there is most love, there may be most freedom.

NOV. Nay, then 'tis time to come to an eclaircissement with you, and to tell you, you must think no more of this lady's love.

L. PLAU. Why, under correction, dear sir?

NOV. There are reasons, reasons, viscount.

L. PLAU. What, I beseech you, noble sir?

NOV. Prithee, prithee, be not impertinent, my lord; some of you lords are such conceited, well-assured, impertinent rogues.

L. PLAU. And you noble wits are so full of shamming and drolling, one knows not where to have you seriously.

NOV. Well, you shall find me in bed with this lady one of these days.

L. PLAU. Nay, I beseech you, spare the lady's honor; for hers and mine will be all one shortly.

NOV. Prithee, my lord, be not an ass. Dost thou think to get her from me? I have had such encouragements —

L. PLAU. I have not been thought unworthy of 'em.

NOV. What, not like mine! Come to an eclaircissement, as I said.

L. PLAU. Why, seriously then, she has told me viscountess sounded prettily.

NOV. And me, that Novel was a name she would sooner change hers for than for any title in England.

L. PLAU. She has commended the softness and respectfulness of my behavior.

NOV. She has praised the briskness of my raillery, of all things, man.

L. PLAU. The sleepiness of my eyes she liked.

NOV. Sleepiness! dulness, dulness. But the fierceness of mine she adored.

L. PLAU. The brightness of my hair she liked.

NOV. The brightness! no, the greasiness, I warrant. But the blackness and lustre of mine she admires.

L. Plau. The gentleness of my smile.

Nov. The subtilty of my leer.

L. Plau. The clearness of my complexion.

Nov. The redness of my lips.

L. Plau. The whiteness of my teeth.

Nov. My jaunty way of picking them.

L. Plau. The sweetness of my breath.

Nov. Ha, ha! — Nay, then she abused you, 'tis plain; for you know what Manly said: — the sweetness of your pulvillio she might mean; but for your breath! ha, ha, ha! Your breath is such, man, that nothing but tobacco can perfume; and your complexion nothing could mend but the small-pox.

L. Plau. Well, sir, you may please to be merry; but, to put you out of all doubt, sir, she has received some jewels from me of value.

Nov. And presents from me; besides what I presented her jauntily, by way of ombre, of three or four hundred pounds value, which I'm sure are the earnest-pence for our love-bargain.

L. Plau. Nay, then, sir, with your favor, and to make an end of all your hopes, look you there, sir, she has writ to me —

Nov. How! how! well, well, and so she has to me; look you there —

([*They*] *deliver to each other their letters.*)

L. Plau. What's here?

Nov. How's this? (*Reads out.*) — "My dear lord, — You'll excuse me for breaking my word with you, since 'twas to oblige, not offend you; for I am only gone abroad but to disappoint Novel, and meet you in the drawing-room; where I expect you with as much impatience as when I used to suffer Novel's visits — the most impertinent fop that ever affected the name of a wit, therefore not capable, I hope, to give you jealousy; for, for your sake alone, you saw I renounced an old lover, and will do all the world. Burn the letter, but lay up the kindness of it in your heart, with your — Olivia." Very fine! but pray let's see mine.

L. Plau. I understand it not; but sure she cannot think so of me.

Nov. (*reads the other letter*). Hum! ha! — "meet — for your sake" — hum — "quitted an old lover — world — burn — in your heart — with your — Olivia." Just the same, the names only altered.

L. Plau. Surely there must be some mistake, or somebody has abused her and us.

Nov. Yes, you are abused, no doubt on't, my lord; but I'll to Whitehall, and see.

L. Plau. And I, where I shall find you are abused.

Nov. Where, if it be so, for our comfort, we cannot fail of meeting with fellow-sufferers enough; for, as Freeman said of another, she stands in the drawing-room, like the glass, ready for all comers, to set their gallantry by her: and, like the glass too, lets no man go from her unsatisfied with himself. (*Exeunt ambo.*)

(*Enter* Olivia *and Boy.*)

Oliv. Both here, and just gone?

Boy. Yes, madam.

Oliv. But are you sure neither saw you deliver the other a letter?

Boy. Yes, yes, madam, I am very sure.

Oliv. Go then to the Old Exchange, to Westminster, Holborn, and all the other places I told you of; I shall not need you these two hours: begone, and take the candle with you, and be sure you leave word again below, I am gone out, to all that ask.

Boy. Yes, madam. (*Exit.*)

Oliv. And my new lover will not ask, I'm sure; he has his lesson, and cannot miss me here, though in the dark: which I have purposely designed, as a remedy against my blushing gallant's modesty; for young lovers, like game-cocks, are made bolder by being kept without light.

(*Enter her husband* Vernish, *as from a journey.*)

Ver. (*softly*). Where is she? Darkness everywhere!

Oliv. What! come before your time? My soul! my life! your haste has augmented your kindness; and let me thank you for it thus, and thus — (*embracing and kissing him*). And though, my soul, the little time since you left me has seemed an age to my impatience, sure it is yet but seven —

Ver. How! who's that you expected after seven?

Oliv. (*aside*). Ha! my husband returned! and have I been throwing away so many kind kisses on my husband, and wronged my lover already?

Ver. Speak, I say, who was't you expected after seven?

Oliv. (*aside*). What shall I say? — oh — (*Aloud.*) Why 'tis but seven days, is it, dearest, since you went out of town? and I expected you not so soon.

Ver. No, sure, 'tis but five days since I left you.

Oliv. Pardon my impatience, dearest, I thought 'em seven at least.

Ver. Nay, then —

Oliv. But, my life, you shall never stay half so long from me again; you shan't indeed, by this kiss you shan't.

Ver. No, no; but why alone in the dark?

Oliv. Blame not my melancholy in your absence. — But, my soul, since you went, I have strange news to tell you: Manly is returned.

Ver. Manly returned! Fortune forbid!

Oliv. Met with the Dutch in the channel, fought, sunk his ship, and all he carried with him. He was here with me yesterday.

Ver. And did you own our marriage to him?

Oliv. I told him I was married to put an end to his love and my trouble; but to whom, is yet a secret kept from him and all the world. And I have used him so scurvily, his great spirit will ne'er return to reason it farther with me: I have sent him to sea again, I warrant.

Ver. 'Twas bravely done. And sure he will now hate the shore more than ever, after so great a disappointment. Be your sure only to keep a while our great secret, till he be gone; in the mean time, I'll lead the easy, honest fool by the nose, as I used to do; and whilst he stays, rail with him at thee; and when he's gone, laugh with thee at him. But have you his cabinet of jewels safe? Part not with a seed-pearl to him, to keep him from starving.

Oliv. Nor from hanging.

Ver. He cannot recover 'em; and, I think, will scorn to beg 'em again.

Oliv. But, my life, have you taken the thousand guineas he left in my name out of the goldsmith's hands?

Ver. Ay, ay; they are removed to another goldsmith's.

Oliv. Ay, but, my soul, you had best have a care he find not where the money is; for his present wants, as I'm informed, are such as will make him inquisitive enough.

Ver. You say true, and he knows the man too; but I'll remove it to-morrow.

Oliv. To-morrow! O do not stay till to-morrow; go to-night, immediately.

Ver. Now I think on't, you advise well, and I will go presently.

Oliv. Presently! instantly! I will not let you stay a jot.

Ver. I will then, though I return not home till twelve.

Oliv. Nay, though not till morning, with all my heart. Go, dearest; I am impatient till you are gone. — (*Thrusts him out.*) So, I have at once now brought about those two grateful businesses, which all prudent women do together, secured money and pleasure; and now all interruptions of the last are removed. Go, husband, and come up, friend; just the buckets in the well; the absence of one brings the other; but I hope, like them too, they will not meet in the way, jostle, and clash together.

(*Enter* Fidelia *and* Manly, *treading softly and staying behind at some distance.*)

So, are you come? (but not the husband-bucket, I hope, again). — (*Softly.*) Who's there? my dearest?

Fid. My life —

Oliv. Right, right. — Where are thy lips? Here, take the dumb and best welcomes, kisses and embraces; 'tis not a time for idle words. In a duel of love, as in others, parleying shows basely. Come, we are alone; and now the word is only satisfaction, and defend not thyself.

Man. (*aside*). How's this? Wuh, she makes love like a devil in a play; and in this darkness, which conceals her angel's face, if I were apt to be afraid, I should think her a devil.

Oliv. (Fidelia *avoiding her*). What, you traverse ground, young gentleman!

Fid. I take breath only.

Man. (*aside*). Good Heavens! how was I deceived!

Oliv. Nay, you are a coward; what, are you afraid of the fierceness of my love?

Fid. Yes, madam, lest its violence might presage its change; and I must needs be afraid you would leave me quickly, who could desert so brave a gentleman as Manly.

Oliv. Oh, name not his name! for in a time of stolen joys, as this is, the filthy name of husband were not a more allaying sound.

Man. (*aside*). There's some comfort yet.

Fid. But did you not love him?

Oliv. Never. How could you think it?

Fid. Because he thought it, who is a man of that sense, nice discerning, and diffidency, that I should think it hard to deceive him.

Oliv. No; he that distrusts most the world, trusts most to himself, and is but the more easily deceived, because he thinks he can't be deceived. His cunning is like the coward's sword, by which he is oft'ner worsted than defended.

Fid. Yet, sure, you used no common art to deceive him.

Oliv. I knew he loved his own singular moroseness so well, as to dote upon any copy of it; wherefore I feigned an hatred to the world too that he might love me in earnest: but, if it had been hard to deceive him, I'm sure 'twere much harder to love him. A dogged, ill-mannered —

Fid. (*aside to* Manly). D'ye hear her, sir? pray, hear her.

Oliv. Surly, untractable, snarling brute! He! a mastiff dog were as fit a thing to make a gallant of.

Man. (*aside*). Ay, a goat, or monkey, were fitter for thee.

Fid. I must confess, for my part, though my rival, I cannot but say he has a manly handsomeness in's face and mien.

Oliv. So has a Saracen in the sign.

Fid. Is proper, and well made.

Oliv. As a drayman.

Fid. Has wit.

Oliv. He rails at all mankind.

Fid. And undoubted courage.

Oliv. Like the hangman's; can murder a man when his hands are tied. He has cruelty indeed; which is no more courage, than his railing is wit.

Man. (*aside*). Thus women, and men like women, are too hard for us, when they think we do not hear 'em: and reputation, like other mistresses, is never true to a man in his absence.

Fid. He is —

Oliv. Prithee, no more of him; I thought I had satisfied you enough before, that he could never be a rival for you to apprehend; and you need not be more assured of my aversion to him, but by the last testimony of my love to you; which I am ready to give you. Come, my soul, this way — (*Pulls* Fidelia.)

Fid. But, madam, what could make you dissemble love to him, when 'twas so hard a thing for you; and flatter his love to you?

Oliv. That which makes all the world flatter and dissemble, 'twas his money: I had a real passion for that. Yet I loved not that so well, as for it to take him; for, as soon as I had his money, I hastened his departure, like a wife, who, when she has made the most of a dying husband's breath, pulls away the pillow.

Man. (*aside*). Damned money! its master's potent rival still; and like a saucy pimp, corrupts, itself, the mistress it procures for us.

Oliv. But I did not think with you, my life, to pass my time in talking. Come hither, come; yet stay, till I have locked a door in the other room, that may chance to let us in some interruption;

which reciting poets or losing gamesters fear not more than I at this time do.

(*Exit* Olivia.)

Fid. Well, I hope you are now satisfied, sir, and will be gone, to think of your revenge?

Man. No, I am not satisfied, and must stay to be revenged.

Fid. How, sir? You'll use no violence to her, I hope, and forfeit your own life, to take away hers? That were no revenge.

Man. No, no, you need not fear: my revenge shall only be upon her honor, not her life.

Fid. How, sir? her honor? O heavens! consider, sir, she has no honor. D'ye call that revenge? Can you think of such a thing? But reflect, sir, how she hates and loathes you.

Man. Yes, so much she hates me, that it would be a revenge sufficient to make her accessary to my pleasure, and then let her know it.

Fid. No, sir, no; to be revenged on her now, were to disappoint her. Pray, sir, let us begone. (*Pulls* Manly.)

Man. Hold off! What, you are my rival then! and therefore you shall stay, and keep the door for me, whilst I go in for you; but when I'm gone, if you dare to stir off from this very board, or breathe the least murmuring accent, I'll cut her throat first; and if you love her, you will not venture her life. — Nay, then I'll cut your throat too; and I know you love your own life at least.

Fid. But, sir; good sir!

Man. Not a word more, lest I begin my revenge on her by killing you.

Fid. But are you sure 'tis revenge that makes you do this? how can it be?

Man. Whist!

Fid. 'Tis a strange revenge, indeed.

Man. If you make me stay, I shall keep my word, and begin with you. No more.

(*Exit* Manly, *at the same door* Olivia *went.*)

(*Manet* Fidelia.)

Fid. O heav'ns! is there not punishment enough
In loving well, if you will have't a crime,
But you must add fresh torments daily to't,
And punish us like peevish rivals still,
Because we fain would find a heaven here?
But did there never any love like me,
That, untried tortures, you must find me out?
Others, at worst, you force to kill themselves;
But I must be self-murdress of my love,
Yet will not grant me pow'r to end my life,
My cruel life; for when a lover's hopes
Are dead and gone, life is unmerciful.

(*Sits down and weeps.*)

([*Re-*]*enter* Manly *to her.*)

Man. (*aside*). I have thought better on't; I must not discover myself now I am without witnesses; for if I barely should publish it, she would deny it with as much impudence, as she would act it again with this young fellow here. — Where are you?

Fid. Here — oh — now I suppose we may be gone.

Man. I will, but not you; you must stay and act the second part of a lover, that is, talk kindness to her.

Fid. Not I, sir.

Man. No disputing, sir, you must; 'tis necessary to my design of coming again to-morrow night.

Fid. What, can you come again then hither?

Man. Yes; and you must make the appointment, and an apology for your leaving her so soon; for I have said not a word to her; but have kept your counsel, as I expect you should do mine. Do this faithfully, and I promise you here, you shall run my fortune still, and we will never part as long as we live; but if you do not do it, expect not to live.

Fid. 'Tis hard, sir; but such a consideration will make it easier. You won't forget your promise, sir?

Man. No, by heav'ns! But I hear her coming. (*Exit.*)

([*Re-*]*enter* Olivia *to* Fidelia.)

Oliv. Where is my life? Run from me

already! You do not love me, dearest; nay, you are angry with me, for you would not so much as speak a kind word to me within: what was the reason?

Fid. I was transported too much.

Oliv. That's kind; but come, my soul, what make you here? Let us go in again; we may be surprised in this room, 'tis so near the stairs.

Fid. No, we shall hear the better here, if anybody should come up.

Oliv. Nay, I assure you, we shall be secure enough within: come, come —

Fid. I am sick, and troubled with a sudden dizziness; cannot stir yet.

Oliv. Come, I have spirits within.

Fid. Oh! — don't you hear a noise, madam?

Oliv. No, no, there is none; come, come. (*Pulls her.*)

Fid. Indeed there is; and I love you so much, I must have a care of your honor, if you wo' not, and go; but to come to you to-morrow night, if you please.

Oliv. With all my soul; but you must not go yet; come, prithee.

Fid. Oh! — I'm now sicker, and am afraid of one of my fits.

Oliv. What fits?

Fid. Of the falling sickness; and I lie generally an hour in a trance: therefore pray consider your honor for the sake of my love, and let me go, that I may return to you often.

Oliv. But will you be sure then to come to-morrow night?

Fid. Yes.

Oliv. Swear.

Fid. By our past kindness!

Oliv. Well, go your ways then, if you will, you naughty creature you. — (*Exit* Fidelia.) These young lovers, with their fears and modesty, make themselves as bad as old ones to us; and I apprehend their bashfulness more than their tattling.

(Fidelia *returns.*)

Fid. O madam, we're undone! There was a gentleman upon the stairs, coming up with a candle, which made me retire. Look you, here he comes!

([*Re-*]*enter* Vernish, *and his Man with a light.*)

Oliv. How, my husband! Oh, undone indeed! This way. (*Exit.*)

Ver. Ha! You shall not 'scape me so, sir. (*Stops* Fidelia.)

Fid. (*aside*). O heav'ns! more fears, plagues, and torments yet in store!

Ver. Come, sir, I guess what your business was here; but this must be your business now. Draw! (*Draws.*)

Fid. Sir —

Ver. No expostulations; I shall not care to hear of't. Draw!

Fid. Good sir!

Ver. How, you rascal! not courage to draw, yet durst do me the greatest injury in the world? Thy cowardice shall not save thy life.

(*Offers to run at* Fidelia.)

Fid. O hold, sir, and send but your servant down, and I'll satisfy you, sir, I could not injure you as you imagine.

Ver. Leave the light and begone. —

(*Exit Servant.*)

Now, quickly, sir, what you've to say, or —

Fid. I am a woman, sir, a very unfortunate woman.

Ver. How! a very handsome woman, I'm sure then: here are witnesses of't too, I confess — (*Pulls off her peruke and feels her breasts.*) — (*Aside.*) Well, I'm glad to find the tables turned, my wife in more danger of cuckolding than I was.

Fid. Now, sir, I hope you are so much a man of honor, as to let me go, now I have satisfied you, sir.

Ver. When you have satisfied me, madam, I will.

Fid. I hope, sir, you are too much a gentleman to urge those secrets from a woman which concern her honor. You may guess my misfortune to be love by my disguise; but a pair of breeches could not wrong you, sir.

Ver. I may believe love has changed your outside, which could not wrong me; but why did my wife run away?

Fid. I know not, sir; perhaps because she would not be forced to discover me to you, or to guide me from your suspicions, that you might not discover me yourself; which ungentlemanlike curiosity I hope you will cease to have, and let me go.

VER. Well, madam, if I must not know who you are, 'twill suffice for me only to know certainly what you are: which you must not deny me. Come, there is a bed within, the proper rack for lovers; and if you are a woman, there you can keep no secrets; you'll tell me there all unasked. Come. (*Pulls her.*)

FID. Oh! what d'ye mean? Help! oh! —

VER. I'll show you; but 'tis in vain to cry out: no one dares help you, for I am lord here.

FID. Tyrant here! — But if you are master of this house, which I have taken for a sanctuary, do not violate it yourself.

VER. No, I'll preserve you here, and nothing shall hurt you, and will be as true to you as your disguise; but you must trust me then. Come, come.

FID. Oh! oh! rather than you should drag me to a deed so horrid and so shameful, I'll die here a thousand deaths. — But you do not look like a ravisher, sir.

VER. Nor you like one would put me to't; but if you will —

FID. Oh! oh! help! help! —

([*Re-*]*enter Servant.*)

VER. You saucy rascal, how durst you come in, when you heard a woman squeak? That should have been your cue to shut the door.

SERV. I come, sir, to let you know, the alderman coming home immediately after you were at his house, has sent his cashier with the money, according to your note.

VER. Damn his money! Money never came to any, sure, unseasonably, till now. Bid him stay.

SERV. He says, he cannot a moment.

VER. Receive it you then.

SERV. He says, he must have your receipt for it: — he is in haste, for I hear him coming up, sir.

VER. Damn him! Help me in here then with this dishonorer of my family.

FID. Oh! oh!

SERV. You say she is a woman, sir.

VER. No matter, sir: must you prate?

FID. Oh heav'ns! is there —

(*They thrust her in, and lock the door.*)

VER. Stay there, my prisoner; you have a short reprieve.

I'll fetch the gold, and that she can't resist,
For with a full hand 'tis we ravish best.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I. — ELIZA'S *Lodgings.*

(*Enter* OLIVIA *and* ELIZA.)

OLIV. Ah, cousin, nothing troubles me, but that I have given the malicious world its revenge, and reason now to talk as freely of me as I used to do of it.

ELIZA. Faith, then, let not that trouble you; for, to be plain, cousin, the world cannot talk worse of you than it did before.

OLIV. How, cousin? I'd have you to know, before this *faux pas*, this trip of mine, the world could not talk of me.

ELIZA. Only that you mind other people's actions so much that you take no care of your own, but to hide 'em; that, like a thief, because you know yourself most guilty, you impeach your fellow-criminals first, to clear yourself.

OLIV. O wicked world!

ELIZA. That you pretend an aversion to all mankind in public, only that their wives and mistresses may not be jealous, and hinder you of their conversation in private.

OLIV. Base world!

ELIZA. That abroad you fasten quarrels upon innocent men for talking of you, only to bring 'em to ask your pardon at home, and to become dear friends with them, who were hardly your acquaintance before.

OLIV. Abominable world!

ELIZA. That you condemn the obscenity of modern plays, only that you may not be censured for never missing the most obscene of the old ones.

OLIV. Damned world!

ELIZA. That you deface the nudities of pictures, and little statues, only because they are not real.

OLIV. Oh, fie, fie, fie! hideous, hideous, cousin! the obscenity of their censures makes me blush!

ELIZA. The truth of 'em, the naughty world would say now.

(*Enter* LETTICE *hastily.*)

LET. O, madam! here is that gentleman coming up who now you say is my master.

OLIV. O, cousin! whither shall I run? protect me, or —

(OLIVIA *runs away, and stands at a distance.*)

(*Enter* VERNISH.)

VER. Nay, nay, come —

OLIV. Oh, sir, forgive me!

VER. Yes, yes, I can forgive you being alone in the dark with a woman in man's clothes; but have a care of a man in woman's clothes.

OLIV. (*aside*). What does he mean? he dissembles, only to get me into his power: or has my dear friend made him believe he was a woman? My husband may be deceived by him, but I'm sure I was not.

VER. Come, come, you need not have lain out of your house for this; but perhaps you were afraid, when I was warm with suspicions, you must have discovered who she was. — And, prithee, may I not know it?

OLIV. She was — (*Aside.*) I hope he has been deceived: and since my lover has played the card, I must not renounce.

VER. Come, what's the matter with thee? If I must not know who she is, I'm satisfied without. Come hither.

OLIV. Sure you do know her; she has told you herself, I suppose.

VER. No, I might have known her better but that I was interrupted by the goldsmith, you know, and was forced to lock her into your chamber, to keep her from his sight; but, when I returned, I found she was got away by tying the window-curtains to the balcony, by which she slid down into the street; for, you must know, I jested with her, and made her believe I'd ravish her; which she apprehended, it seems, in earnest.

OLIV. And she got from you?

VER. Yes.

OLIV. And is quite gone?

VER. Yes.

OLIV. I'm glad on't — otherwise you had ravished her, sir? But how durst you go so far, as to make her believe you would ravish her? let me understand that, sir. What! there's guilt in your face, you blush too; nay, then you did ravish her, you did, you base fellow! What, ravish a woman in the first month of our marriage! 'Tis a double injury to me, thou base, ungrateful man! wrong my bed already, villain! I could tear out those false eyes, barbarous, unworthy wretch!

ELIZA. So, so! —

VER. Prithee hear, my dear.

OLIV. I will never hear you, my plague, my torment!

VER. I swear — prithee, hear me.

OLIV. I have heard already too many of your false oaths and vows, especially your last in the church. O wicked man! and wretched woman that I was! I wish I had then sunk down into a grave, rather than to have given you my hand, to be led to your loathsome bed. Oh — oh — (*Seems to weep.*)

VER. So, very fine! just a marriage-quarrel! which, though it generally begins by the wife's fault, yet, in the conclusion, it becomes the husband's; and whosoever offends at first, he only is sure to ask pardon at last. My dear —

OLIV. My devil! —

VER. Come, prithee be appeased, and go home; I have bespoken our supper betimes: for I could not eat till I found you. Go, I'll give you all kind of satisfactions; and one, which uses to be a reconciling one, two hundred of those guineas I received last night, to do what you will with.

OLIV. What, would you pay me for being your bawd?

Ver. Nay, prithee no more; go, and I'll thoroughly satisfy you when I come home; and then, too, we will have a fit of laughter at Manly, whom I am going to find at the Cock in Bow-street, where I hear he dined. Go, dearest, go home.

Eliza (*aside*). A very pretty turn, indeed, this!

Ver. Now, cousin, since by my wife I have that honor and privilege of calling you so, I have something to beg of you too; which is, not to take notice of our marriage to any whatever yet a while, for some reasons very important to me; and next, that you will do my wife the honor to go home with her; and me the favor, to use that power you have with her, in our reconcilement.

Eliza. That, I dare promise, sir, will be no hard matter. Your servant. — (*Exit* Vernish.) — Well, cousin, this, I confess, was reasonable hypocrisy; you were the better for't.

Oliv. What hypocrisy?

Eliza. Why, this last deceit of your husband was lawful, since in your own defence.

Oliv. What deceit? I'd have you to know I never deceived my husband.

Eliza. You do not understand me, sure; I say, this was an honest come-off, and a good one; but 'twas a sign your gallant had had enough of your conversation, since he could so dext'rously cheat your husband in passing for a woman.

Oliv. What d'ye mean, once more, with my gallant, and passing for a woman?

Eliza. What do you mean? You see your husband took him for a woman.

Oliv. Whom?

Eliza. Heyday! Why, the man he found you with, for whom last night you were so much afraid; and who you told me —

Oliv. Lord, you rave sure!

Eliza. Why, did you not tell me last night —

Oliv. I know not what I might tell you last night, in a fright.

Eliza. Ay, what was that fright for? for a woman? besides, were you not afraid to see your husband just now? I warrant, only for having been found with a woman! Nay, did you not just now, too, own your false step, or trip, as you called it? which was with a woman too! Fie, this fooling is so insipid, 'tis offensive!

Oliv. And fooling with my honor will be more offensive. Did you not hear my husband say he found me with a woman in man's clothes? and d'ye think he does not know a man from a woman?

Eliza. Not so well, I'm sure, as you do; therefore I'd rather take your word.

Oliv. What, you grow scurrilous, and are, I find, more censorious than the world! I must have a care of you, I see.

Eliza. No, you need not fear yet, I'll keep your secret.

Oliv. My secret! I'd have you to know, I have no need of confidants, though you value yourself upon being a good one.

Eliza. O admirable confidence! You show more in denying your wickedness, than other people in glorying in't.

Oliv. Confidence, to me! to me such language! nay, then I'll never see your face again. — (*Aside.*) I'll quarrel with her, that people may never believe I was in her power; but take for malice all the truth she may speak against me. — (*Aloud.*) Lettice, where are you? Let us be gone from this censorious, ill woman.

Eliza (*aside*). Nay, thou shalt stay a little, to damn thyself quite. — (*Aloud.*) One word first, pray, madam; can you swear that whom your husband found you with —

Oliv. Swear! ay, that whosoever 'twas that stole up, unknown, into my room, when 'twas dark, I know not, whether man or woman, by heav'ns! by all that's good; or, may I never more have joys here, or in the other world! Nay, may I eternally —

Eliza. Be damned. So, so, you are damned enough already by your oaths; and I enough confirmed; and now you may please to be gone. Yet take this advice with you, in this plain-dealing age, to leave off forswearing yourself; for when people hardly think the better of a woman for her real modesty, why should you put that great constraint upon yourself to feign it?

Oliv. O hideous, hideous advice! Let us go out of the hearing of it. She will spoil us, Lettice.

(*Exeunt* Olivia *and* Lettice *at one door*, Eliza *at t'other.*)

[Scene II.] — *The Cock in Bow Street. A table and bottles.*

(*Enter* Manly *and* Fidelia.)

Man. How! saved her honor by making her husband believe you were a woman! 'Twas well, but hard enough to do, sure.

Fid. We were interrupted before he could contradict me.

Man. But can't you tell me, d'ye say, what kind of man he was?

Fid. I was so frightened, I confess, I can give no other account of him, but that he was pretty tall, round-faced, and one, I'm sure, I ne'er had seen before.

Man. But she, you say, made you swear to return to-night?

Fid. But I have since sworn, never to go near her again; for the husband would murder me, or worse, if he caught me again.

Man. No, I'll go with you, and defend you to-night, and then I'll swear, too, never to go near her again.

Fid. Nay, indeed, sir, I will not go, to be accessary to your death too. Besides, what should you go again, sir, for?

Man. No disputing, or advice, sir; you have reason to know I am unalterable. Go, therefore, presently, and write her a note, to inquire if her assignation with you holds; and if not to be at her own house, where else; and be importunate to gain admittance to her to-night. Let your messenger, ere he deliver your letter, inquire first if her husband be gone out. Go, 'tis now almost six of the clock; I expect you back here before seven, with leave to see her then. Go, do this dext'rously, and expect the performance of my last night's promise, never to part with you.

Fid. Ay, sir; but will you be sure to remember that?

Man. Did I ever break my word? Go, no more replies, or doubts.

(*Exit* Fidelia.)

(*Enter* Freeman *to* Manly.)

Where hast thou been?

Free. In the next room, with my Lord Plausible and Novel.

Man. Ay, we came hither, because 'twas a private house; but with thee indeed no house can be private, for thou hast that pretty quality of the familiar fops of the town, who, in an eating-house, always keep company with all people in't but those they came with.

Free. I went into their room, but to keep them, and my own fool the squire, out of your room; but you shall be peevish now, because you have no money. But why the devil won't you write to those we were speaking of? Since your modesty, or your spirit, will not suffer you to speak to 'em, to lend you money, why won't you try 'em at last that way?

Man. Because I know 'em already, and can bear want better than denials, nay, than obligations.

Free. Deny you! they cannot. All of 'em have been your intimate friends.

Man. No, they have been people only I have obliged particularly.

Free. Very well; therefore you ought to go to 'em the rather, sure.

Man. No, no. Those you have obliged most, most certainly avoid you, when you can oblige 'em no longer; and they take your visits like so many duns. Friends, like mistresses, are avoided for obligations past.

Free. Pshaw! but most of 'em are your relations; men of great fortune and honor.

Man. Yes; but relations have so much honor as to think poverty taints the blood, and disown their wanting kindred; believing, I suppose, that as riches at first makes a gentleman, the want of 'em degrades him. But damn 'em! now I am poor, I'll anticipate their contempt, and disown them.

Free. But you have many a female acquaintance whom you have been liberal to, who may have a heart to refund to you a little, if you would ask it: they are not all Olivias.

Man. Damn thee! how couldst thou think of such a thing? I would as soon rob my footman of his wages. Besides 'twere in vain too; for a wench is like a box in an ordinary, receives all people's money easily, but there is no getting, nay, shaking any out again; and he that fills it is sure never to keep the key.

Free. Well, but noble captain, would you make me believe that you, who know half the town, have so many friends, and have obliged so many, can't borrow fifty or an hundred pound?

Man. Why, noble lieutenant, you who know all the town, and call all you know friends, methinks should not wonder at it; since you find ingratitude too. For how many lords' families (though descended from blacksmiths or tinkers) hast thou called great and illustrious? how many ill tables called good eating? how many noisy coxcombs' wits? how many pert, cocking cowards stout? how many tawdry, affected rogues well-dressed? how many perukes admired? and how many ill verses applauded? and yet canst not borrow a shilling. Dost thou expect I, who always spoke truth, should?

Free. Nay, now you think you have paid me; but hark you, captain, I have heard of a thing called grinning honor, but never of starving honor.

Man. Well, but it has been the fate of some brave men: and if they wo't give me a ship again, I can go starve anywhere, with a musket on my shoulder.

Free. Give you a ship! why, you will not solicit it.

Man. If I have not solicited it by my services, I know no other way.

Free. Your servant, sir; nay, then I'm satisfied, I must solicit my widow the closer, and run the desperate fortune of matrimony on shore. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter, to* Manly, Vernish.)

Man. How! — Nay, here is a friend indeed; and he that has him in his arms can know no wants. (*Embraces* Vernish.)

Ver. Dear sir! and he that is in your arms is secure from all fears whatever: nay, our nation is secure by your defeat at sea, and the Dutch that fought against you have proved enemies to themselves only in bringing you back to us.

Man. Fie, fie! this from a friend? and yet from any other 'twere insufferable: I thought I should never have taken anything ill from you.

Ver. A friend's privilege is to speak his mind, though it be taken ill.

Man. But your tongue need not tell me you think too well of me; I have found it from your heart, which spoke in actions, your unalterable heart. But Olivia is false, my friend, which I suppose is no news to you.

Ver. (*aside*). He's in the right on't.

Man. But couldst thou not keep her true to me?

Ver. Not for my heart, sir.

Man. But could you not perceive it at all before I went? Could she so deceive us both?

Ver. I must confess, the first time I knew it was three days after your departure, when she received the money you had left in Lombard-street in her name; and her tears did not hinder her, it seems, from counting that. You would trust her with all, like a true generous lover!

Man. And she, like a mean jilting —

Ver. Trait'rous —

Man. Base —

Ver. Damned —

Man. Covetous —

Ver. Mercenary whore. — (*Aside.*) I can hardly hold from laughing.

Man. Ay, a mercenary whore indeed; for she made me pay her before I lay with her.

Ver. How! — Why, have you lain with her?

Man. Ay, ay.

Ver. Nay, she deserves you should report it at least, though you have not.

Man. Report it! by heav'n, 'tis true!

Ver. How! sure not.

Man. I do not use to lie, nor you to doubt me.

Ver. When?

Man. Last night, about seven or eight of the clock.

Ver. Ha! — (*Aside.*) Now I remember, I thought she spake as if she expected some other rather than me. A confounded whore, indeed!

Man. But what, thou wonderest at it! nay, you seem to be angry too.

Ver. I cannot but be enraged against her, for her usage of you: damned, infamous, common jade!

Man. Nay, her cuckold, who first cuckolded me in my money, shall not laugh all himself; we will do him reason, shan't we?

Ver. Ay, ay.

Man. But thou dost not, for so great a friend, take pleasure enough in your friend's revenge, methinks.

Ver. Yes, yes; I'm glad to know it, since you have lain with her.

Man. Thou canst not tell who that rascal, her cuckold, is?

Ver. No.

Man. She would keep it from you, I suppose.

Ver. Yes, yes —

Man. Thou wouldst laugh, if thou knewest but all the circumstances of my having her. Come, I'll tell thee.

Ver. Damn her! I care not to hear any more of her.

Man. Faith, thou shalt. You must know —

([*Re-*]*enter* Freeman *backwards, endeavoring to keep out* Novel, Lord Plausible, Jerry Blackacre, *and* Major Oldfox, *who all press upon him.*)

Free. I tell you, he has a wench with him, and would be private.

Man. Damn 'em! a man can't open a bottle in these eating-houses, but presently you have these impudent, intruding, buzzing flies and insects in your glass. — Well, I'll tell thee all anon. In the mean time, prithee, go to her, but not from me, and try if you can get her to lend me but an hundred pound of my money, to supply my present wants; for I suppose there is no recovering any of it by law.

Ver. Not any; think not of it; or by this way neither.

Man. Go try, at least.

Ver. I'll go; but I can satisfy you beforehand 'twill be to no purpose. You'll no more find a refunding wench —

Man. Than a refunding lawyer; indeed their fees alike scarce ever return. However, try her; put it to her.

Ver. Ay, ay, I'll try her; put it to her home with a vengeance.

(*Exit* Vernish.)

(*Manent cæteri.*)

Nov. Nay, you shall be our judge, Manly — Come, major, I'll speak it to your teeth; if people provoke me to say bitter things to their faces, they must take what follows; though, like my lord Plausible, I'd rather do't civilly behind their backs.

Man. Nay, thou art a dangerous rogue, I've heard, behind a man's back.

L. Plau. You wrong him sure, noble captain; he would do a man no more harm behind his back than to his face.

Free. I am of my lord's mind.

Man. Yes, a fool, like a coward, is the more to be feared behind a man's back, more than a witty man; for, as a coward is more bloody than a brave man, a fool is more malicious than a man of wit.

Nov. A fool, tar, — a fool! nay, thou art a brave sea-judge of wit! a fool! Prithee, when did you ever find me want something to say, as you do often?

Man. Nay, I confess thou art always talking, roaring, or making a noise; that I'll say for thee.

Nov. Well, and is talking a sign of a fool?

Man. Yes, always talking, especially too if it be loud and fast, is the sign of a fool.

Nov. Pshaw! talking is like fencing, the quicker the better; run 'em down, run 'em down, no matter for parrying; push on still, sa, sa, sa! no matter whether you argue in form, push in guard or no.

Man. Or hit, or no; I think thou always talkest without thinking, Novel.

Nov. Ay, ay; studied play's the worse,

to follow the allegory, as the old pedant says.

Old. A young fop!

Man. I ever thought the man of most wit had been like him of most money, who has no vanity in showing it everywhere, whilst the beggarly pusher of his fortune has all he has about him still, only to show.

Nov. Well, sir, and makes a pretty show in the world, let me tell you; nay, a better than your close hunks. A pox, give ready money in play! what care I for a man's reputation? what are we the better for your substantial, thrifty curmudgeon in wit, sir?

Old. Thou art a profuse young rogue indeed.

Nov. So much for talking, which, I think I have proved a mark of wit; and so is railing, roaring, and making a noise; for railing is satire, you know; and roaring and making a noise, humor.

([*Re-*]*enter to them* Fidelia, *taking* Manly *aside, and showing him a paper.*)

Fid. The hour is betwixt seven and eight exactly: 'tis now half an hour after six.

Man. Well, go then to the Piazza, and wait for me; as soon as it is quite dark, I'll be with you. I must stay here yet a while for my friend. — (*Exit* Fidelia.) But is railing satire, Novel?

Free. And roaring and making a noise, humor?

Nov. What, won't you confess there's humor in roaring and making a noise?

Free. No.

Nov. Nor in cutting napkins and hangings?

Man. No, sure.

Nov. Dull fops!

Old. O rogue, rogue, insipid rogue! — Nay, gentlemen, allow him those things for wit; for his parts lie only that way.

Nov. Peace, old fool! I wonder not at thee; but that young fellows should be so dull, as to say there's no humor in making a noise, and breaking windows! I tell you, there's wit and humor too in both; and a wit is as well known by his frolic, as by his smile.

Old. Pure rogue! there's your modern wit for you! Wit and humor in breaking of windows! There's mischief, if you will, but no wit, or humor.

Nov. Prithee, prithee, peace, old fool! I tell you, where there is mischief, there's wit. Don't we esteem the monkey a wit amongst beasts, only because he's mischievous? and let me tell you, as good-nature is a sign of a fool, being mischievous is a sign of a wit.

Old. O rogue, rogue! pretend to be a wit, by doing mischief and railing!

Nov. Why, thou, old fool, hast no other pretence to the name of a wit, but by railing at new plays!

Old. Thou, by railing at that facetious, noble way of wit, quibbling!

Nov. Thou callest thy dulness gravity; and thy dozing, thinking.

Old. You, sir, your dulness, spleen; and you talk much, and say nothing.

Nov. Thou readest much, and understandest nothing, sir.

Old. You laugh loud, and break no jest.

Nov. You rail, and nobody hangs himself; and thou hast nothing of the satire but in thy face.

Old. And you have no jest, but your face, sir.

Nov. Thou art an illiterate pedant.

Old. Thou art a fool, with a bad memory.

Man. Come, a pox on you both! you have done like wits now; for you wits, when you quarrel, never give over till ye prove one another fools.

Nov. And you fools have never any occasion of laughing at us wits but when we quarrel. Therefore, let us be friends, Oldfox.

Man. They are such wits as thou art, who make the name of a wit as scandalous as that of bully; and signify a loud-laughing, talking, incorrigible coxcomb, as bully a roaring, hardened coward.

Free. And would have his noise and laughter pass for wit, as t'other his huffing and blust'ring for courage.

([*Re-*]*enter* VERNISH.)

MAN. Gentlemen, with your leave, here is one I would speak with; and I have nothing to say to you.

(*Puts 'em out of the room.*)

(*Manent* MANLY, VERNISH.)

VER. I told you 'twas in vain to think of getting money out of her. She says, if a shilling would do't, she would not save you from starving or hanging, or what you would think worse, begging or flattering; and rails so at you, one would not think you had lain with her.

MAN. O friend, never trust for that matter a woman's railing; for she is no less a dissembler in her hatred than her love; and as her fondness of her husband is a sign he's a cuckold, her railing at another man is a sign she lies with him.

VER. (*aside*). He's in the right on't: I know not what to trust to.

MAN. But you did not take any notice of it to her, I hope?

VER. So! — (*Aside.*) Sure he is afraid I should have disproved him by an inquiry of her: all may be well yet.

MAN. What hast thou in thy head that makes thee seem so unquiet?

VER. Only this base, impudent woman's falseness; I cannot put her out of my head.

MAN. O my dear friend, be not you too sensible of my wrongs; for then I shall feel 'em too with more pain, and think 'em unsufferable. Damn her, her money, and that ill-natured whore too, Fortune herself! But if thou wouldst ease a little my present trouble, prithee go borrow me somewhere else some money. I can trouble thee.

VER. You trouble me, indeed, most sensibly, when you command me anything I cannot do. I have lately lost a great deal of money at play, more than I can yet pay; so that not only my money, but my credit too is gone, and know not where to borrow; but could rob a church for you. — (*Aside.*) Yet would rather end your wants by cutting your throat.

MAN. Nay, then I doubly feel my poverty, since I'm incapable of supplying thee.

(*Embraces him.*)

VER. But, methinks, she that granted you the last favor, (as they call it) should not deny you anything —

NOV. (*looks in*). Hey, tarpaulin, have you done?

(*And retires again.*)

VER. I understand not that point of kindness, I confess.

MAN. No, thou dost not understand it, and I have not time to let you know all now; for these fools, you see, will interrupt us; but anon, at supper, we'll laugh at leisure together at Olivia's cuckold, who took a young fellow, that goes between his wife and me, for a woman.

VER. Ha!

MAN. Senseless, easy rascal! 'twas no wonder she chose him for a husband; but she thought him, I thank her, fitter than me, for that blind, bearing office.

VER. (*aside*). I could not be deceived in that long woman's hair tied up behind, nor those infallible proofs, her pouting, swelling breasts: I have handled too many sure not to know 'em.

MAN. What, you wonder the fellow could be such a blind coxcomb?

VER. Yes, yes —

NOV. (*looks in again*). Nay, prithee, come to us, Manly. Gad, all the fine things one says in their company are lost without thee.

MAN. Away, fop! I'm busy yet. (NOVEL *retires.*) You see we cannot talk here at our ease; besides, I must be gone immediately, in order to meeting with Olivia again to-night.

VER. To-night! it cannot be, sure —

MAN. I had an appointment just now from her.

VER. For what time?

MAN. At half an hour after seven precisely.

VER. Don't you apprehend the husband?

MAN. He! snivelling gull! he a thing to be feared! a husband! the tamest of creatures!

VER. (*aside*). Very fine!

MAN. But, prithee, in the mean time,

go try to get me some money. Though thou art too modest to borrow for thyself, thou canst do anything for me, I know. Go; for I must be gone to Olivia. Go, and meet me here, anon. — Freeman, where are you? (*Exit* MANLY.)

(*Manet* VERNISH.)

VER. Ay, I'll meet with you, I warrant; but it shall be at Olivia's. Sure, it cannot be: she denies it so calmly, and with that honest, modest assurance, it can't be true — and he does not use to lie — but belying a woman when she won't be kind, is the only lie a brave man will least scruple. But then the woman in man's clothes, whom he calls a man! — Well, but by her breasts I know her to be a woman — but then again, his appointment from her, to meet him again to-night! I am distracted more with doubt than jealousy. Well, I have no way to disabuse or revenge myself, but by going home immediately, putting on a riding-suit, and pretending to my wife the same business which carried me out of town last, requires me again to go post to Oxford to-night. Then, if the appointment he boasts of be true, it's sure to hold; and I shall have an opportunity either of clearing her, or revenging myself on both. Perhaps she is his wench, of an old date, and I am his cully, whilst I think him mine; and he has seemed to make his wench rich, only that I might take her off his hands. Or if he has but lately lain with her, he must needs discover by her my treachery to him; which I'm sure he will revenge with my death, and which I must prevent with his, if it were only but for fear of his too just reproaches; for I must confess, I never had till now any excuse but that of int'rest, for doing ill to him. (*Exit* VERNISH.)

(*Re-enter* MANLY *and* FREEMAN.)

MAN. Come hither; only, I say, be sure you mistake not the time. You know the house exactly where Olivia lodges; 'tis just hard by.

FREE. Yes, yes.

MAN. Well then, bring 'em all, I say, thither, and all you know that may be then in the house; for the more witnesses I have of her infamy, the greater will be my revenge: and be sure you come straight up to her chamber without more ado. Here, take the watch; you see 'tis above a quarter past seven; be there in half an hour exactly.

FREE. You need not doubt my diligence or dexterity; I am an old scourer, and can naturally beat up a wench's quarters that won't be civil. Shan't we break her windows too?

MAN. No, no; be punctual only. (*Exeunt ambo.*)

(*Enter* WIDOW BLACKACRE, *and two Knights of the Post; a Waiter with wine.*)

WID. Sweetheart, are you sure the door was shut close, that none of those roysters saw us come in?

WAIT. Yes, mistress; and you shall have a privater room above, instantly. (*Exit Waiter.*)

WID. You are safe enough, gentlemen; for I have been private in this house ere now, upon other occasions, when I was something younger. Come, gentlemen; in short, I leave my business to your care and fidelity: and so, here's to you.

1ST KNIGHT. We were ungrateful rogues if we should not be honest to you; for we have had a great deal of your money.

WID. And you have done me many a good job for't; and so, here's to you again.

2ND KNIGHT. Why, we have been perjured but six times for you.

1ST KNIGHT. Forged but four deeds, with your husband's last deed of gift.

2ND KNIGHT. And but three wills.

1ST KNIGHT. And counterfeited hands and seals to some six bonds; I think that's all, brother.

WID. Ay, that's all, gentlemen; and so, here's to you again.

2ND KNIGHT. Nay, 'twould do one's heart good to be forsworn for you. You have a conscience in your ways, and pay us well.

1ST KNIGHT. You are in the right on't, brother; one would be damned for her with all one's heart.

2nd Knight. But there are rogues, who make us forsworn for 'em; and when we come to be paid, they'll be forsworn too, and not pay us our wages, which they promised with oaths sufficient.

1st Knight. Ay, a great lawyer that shall be nameless bilked me too.

Wid. That was hard, methinks, that a lawyer should use gentlemen witnesses no better.

2nd Knight. A lawyer! d'ye wonder a lawyer should do't? I was bilked by a reverend divine, that preaches twice on Sundays, and prays half an hour still before dinner.

Wid. How! a conscientious divine, and not pay people for damning themselves! Sure then, for all his talking, he does not believe damnation. But come, to our business. Pray be sure to imitate exactly the flourish at the end of this name.

(*Pulls out a deed or two.*)

1st Knight. O he's the best in England at untangling a flourish, madam.

Wid. And let not the seal be a jot bigger. Observe well the dash too, at the end of this name.

2nd Knight. I warrant you, madam.

Wid. Well, these and many other shifts, poor widows are put to sometimes; for everybody would be riding a widow, as they say, and breaking into her jointure. They think marrying a widow an easy business, like leaping the hedge where another has gone over before. A widow is a mere gap, a gap with them.

(*Enter to them* Major Oldfox, *with two Waiters. The Knights of the Post huddle up the writings.*)

What, he here! Go then, go, my hearts, you have your instructions.

(*Exeunt Knights of the Post.*)

Old. Come, madam, to be plain with you, I'll be fobbed off no longer. — (*Aside.*) I'll bind her and gag her but she shall hear me. — (*To the Waiters.*) Look you, friends, there's the money I promised you; and now do you what you promised me: here are my garters, and here's a gag. — (*To the Widow.*) You shall be acquainted with my parts, lady, you shall.

Wid. Acquainted with your parts! A rape! a rape! — What, will you ravish me?

(*The Waiters tie her to the chair, gag her, and exeunt.*)

Old. Yes, lady, I will ravish you; but it shall be through the ear, lady, the ear only, with my well-penned acrostics.

(*Enter to them* Freeman, Jerry Blackacre, *three Bailiffs, a Constable, and his Assistants, with the two Knights of the Post.*)

What, shall I never read my things undisturbed again?

Jer. O law! my mother bound hand and foot, and gaping as if she rose before her time to-day!

Free. What means this, Oldfox? — But I'll release you from him; you shall be no man's prisoner but mine. Bailiffs, execute your writ.

(Freeman *unties her.*)

Old. Nay, then I'll be gone, for fear of being bail, and paying her debts, without being her husband. (*Exit* Oldfox.)

1st Bail. We arrest you in the king's name, at the suit of Mr. Freeman, guardian to Jeremiah Blackacre, esquire, in an action of ten thousand pounds.

Wid. How, how! in a choke-bail action! What, and the pen-and-ink gentlemen taken too! — Have you confessed, you rogues?

1st Knight. We needed not to confess; for the bailiffs dogged us hither to the very door, and overheard all that you and we said.

Wid. Undone, undone then! no man was ever too hard for me till now. O Jerry, child, wilt thou vex again the womb that bore thee?

Jer. Ay, for bearing me before wedlock, as you say. But I'll teach you call a Blackacre a bastard, though you were never so much my mother.

Wid. (*aside*). Well, I'm undone! not one trick left? no law-mesh imaginable? — (*To* Freeman.) Cruel sir, a word with you, I pray.

Free. In vain, madam; for you have no other way to release yourself, but by the bonds of matrimony.

Wid. How, sir, how! that were but to sue out an habeas-corpus, for a removal from one prison to another. Matrimony!

Free. Well, bailiffs, away with her.

Wid. O stay, sir! can you be so cruel as to bring me under covert-baron again, and put it out of my power to sue in my own name? Matrimony to a woman [is] worse than excommunication, in depriving her of the benefit of the law; and I would rather be deprived of life. But hark you, sir, I am contented you should hold and enjoy my person by lease or patent, but not by the spiritual patent called a licence; that is, to have the privileges of a husband without the dominion; that is, *Durante beneplacito*. In consideration of which, I will out of my jointure secure you an annuity of three hundred pounds a year, and pay your debts; and that's all you younger brothers desire to marry a widow for, I'm sure.

Free. Well, widow, if —

Jer. What! I hope, bully-guardian, you are not making agreements without me?

Free. No, no. First, widow, you must say no more that he is a son of a whore; have a care of that. And then, he must have a settled exhibition of forty pounds a year, and a nag of assizes, kept by you, but not upon the common; and have free ingress, egress, and regress to and from your maids' garret.

Wid. Well, I can grant all that too.

Jer. Ay, ay, fair words butter no cabbage; but guardian, make her sign, sign and seal; for otherwise, if you knew her as well as I, you would not trust her word for a farthing.

Free. I warrant thee, squire. — Well, widow, since you art so generous, I will be generous too; and if you'll secure me four hundred pound a year, but during your life, and pay my debts, not above a thousand pound, I'll bate you your person, to dispose of as you please.

Wid. Have a care, sir, a settlement without a consideration is void in law: you must do something for't.

Free. Prithee, then let the settlement on me be called alimony; and the consideration, our separation. Come; my lawyer, with writings ready drawn, is within, and in haste. Come.

Wid. But, what, no other kind of consideration, Mr. Freeman? Well, a widow, I see, is a kind of sinecure, by custom of which the unconscionable incumbent enjoys the profits, without any duty, but does that still elsewhere. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

Scene [III.] — Olivia's *Lodging*.

(*Enter* Olivia *with a candle in her hand.*)

Oliv. So, I am now prepared once more for my timorous young lover's reception. My husband is gone; and go thou out too, thou next interrupter of love. — (*Puts out the candle.*) Kind darkness, that frees us lovers from scandal and bashfulness, from the censure of our gallants and the world! — So, are you there?

(*Enter to* Olivia, Fidelia, *followed softly by* Manly.)

Come, my dear punctual lover, there is not such another in the world; thou hast beauty and youth to please a wife; address and wit, to amuse and fool a husband; nay, thou hast all things to be wished in a lover, but your fits. I hope, my dear, you won't have one to-night; and that you may not, I'll lock the door, though there be no need of it, but to lock out your fits; for my husband is just gone out of town again. Come, where are you? (*Goes to the door and locks it.*)

Man. (*aside*). Well, thou hast impudence enough to give me fits too, and make revenge itself impotent, hinder me from making thee yet more infamous, if it can be.

Oliv. Come, come, my soul, come.

Fid. Presently, my dear; we have time enough sure.

Oliv. How? time enough! True lovers can no more think they ever have time enough, than love enough. You shall stay with me all night; but that is but a lover's moment. Come.

Fid. But won't you let me give you and

myself the satisfaction of telling you how I abused your husband last night?

Oliv. Not when you can give me, and yourself too, the satisfaction of abusing him again to-night. Come.

Fid. Let me but tell you how your husband —

Oliv. O name not his, or Manly's more loathsome name, if you love me! I forbid 'em last night: and you know I mentioned my husband but once, and he came. No talking, pray; 'twas ominous to us. — (*A noise at the door.*) You make me fancy a noise at the door already, but I'm resolved not to be interrupted. Where are you? Come, for rather than lose my dear expectation now, though my husband were at the door, and the bloody ruffian Manly here in the room, with all his awful insolence, I would give myself to this dear hand, to be led away to heavens of joys, which none but thou canst give. — (*The noise at the door increases.*) But what's this noise at the door? So, I told you what talking would come to. Ha! — O Heavens, my husband's voice! —

(Olivia *listens at the door.*)

Man. (*aside*). Freeman is come too soon.

Oliv. Oh, 'tis he! — Then here's the happiest minute lost that ever bashful boy or trifling woman fooled away! I'm undone! my husband's reconcilement too was false, as my joy, all delusion. But come this way, here's a back door. — (*Exit, and returns.*) The officious jade has locked us in, instead of locking others out; but let us then escape your way, by the balcony; and whilst you pull down the curtains, I'll fetch from my closet what next will best secure our escape. I have left my key in the door, and 'twill not suddenly be broke open. (*Exit.*)

(*A noise as it were people forcing the door.*)

Man. Stir not, yet fear nothing.

Fid. Nothing but your life, sir.

Man. We shall know this happy man she calls husband.

(Olivia *re-enters.*)

Oliv. Oh, where are you? What, idle with fear? Come, I'll tie the curtains, if you will hold. Here, take this cabinet and purse, for it is thine, if we escape; — (Manly *takes from her the cabinet and purse.*)— therefore let us make haste.

(*Exit* Olivia.)

Man. 'Tis mine indeed now again, and it shall never escape more from me, to you at least.

(*The door broken open, enter* Vernish *alone, with a dark-lantern and a sword, running at* Manly, *who draws, puts by the thrust, and defends himself, whilst* Fidelia *runs at* Vernish *behind.*)

Ver. (*with a low voice*). So, there I'm right, sure —

Man. (*softly*). Sword and dark-lantern, villain, are some odds; but —

Ver. (*with a low voice*). Odds! I'm sure I find more odds than I expected. What, has my insatiable two seconds at once? but —

(*Whilst they fight,* Olivia *re-enters, tying two curtains together.*)

Oliv. Where are you now? — What, is he entered then, and are they fighting? — Oh, do not kill one that can make no defence! — (Manly *throws* Vernish *down and disarms him.*) How! but I think he has the better on't. Here's his scarf, 'tis he. — So, keep him down still: I hope thou hast no hurt, my dearest?

(*Embracing* Manly.)

(*Enter to them* Freeman, Lord Plausible, Novel, Jerry Blackacre, *and the* Widow Blackacre, *lighted in by the two Sailors with torches.*)

Ha! — what? — Manly! and have I been thus concerned for him, embracing him? and has he his jewels again too? What means this? Oh, 'tis too sure, as well as my shame! which I'll go hide for ever.

(*Offers to go out,* Manly *stops her.*)

Man. No, my dearest; after so much kindness as has passed between us, I cannot part with you yet. — Freeman, let nobody stir out of the room; for notwithstanding your lights, we are yet in the dark, till this gentleman please to turn his face. — (*Pulls* Vernish *by the sleeve.*) How! Vernish! art thou the happy man then? Thou! thou! speak, I say; but thy guilty silence tells me all. — Well, I shall not upbraid thee; for my wonder is striking me as dumb as thy shame has made thee. But what? my little volunteer hurt, and fainting!

Fid. My wound, sir, is but a slight one in my arm; 'tis only my fear of your danger, sir, not yet well over.

Man. But what's here? More strange things! — (*Observing* Fidelia's *hair untied behind, and without a peruke, which she lost in the scuffle.*) What means this long woman's hair, and face! Now all of it appears too beautiful for a man; which I still thought womanish indeed! What, you have not deceived me too, my little volunteer?

Oliv. (*aside*). Me she has, I'm sure.

Man. Speak!

(*Enter* Eliza *and* Lettice.)

Eliza. What, cousin, I am brought hither by your woman, I suppose, to be a witness of the second vindication of your honor?

Oliv. Insulting is not generous. You might spare me, I have you.

Eliza. Have a care, cousin, you'll confess anon too much: and I would not have your secrets.

Man. (*to* Fidelia). Come, your blushes answer me sufficiently, and you have been my volunteer in love.

Fid. I must confess I needed no compulsion to follow you all the world over; which I attempted in this habit, partly out of shame to own my love to you, and fear of a greater shame, your refusal of it; for I knew of your engagement to this lady, and the constancy of your nature; which nothing could have altered but herself.

Man. Dear madam, I desired you to bring me out of confusion, and you have given me more. I know not what to speak to you, or how to look upon you; the sense of my rough, hard, and ill usage of you, (though chiefly your own fault) gives me more pain now 'tis over, than you had when you suffered it: and if my heart, the refusal of such a woman, (*pointing to* Olivia) were not a sacrifice to profane your love, and a greater wrong to you than ever yet I did you, I would beg of you to receive it, though you used it as she had done; for though it deserved not from her the treatment she gave it, it does from you.

Fid. Then it has had punishment sufficient from her already, and needs no more from me; and, I must confess, I would not be the only cause of making you break your last night's oath to me, of never parting with me; if you do not forget or repent it.

Man. Then take for ever my heart, and this with it; (*gives her the cabinet*) for 'twas given to you before, and my heart was before your due; I only beg leave to dispose of these few. — Here, madam, I never yet left my wench unpaid.

(*Takes some of the jewels, and offers 'em to* Olivia; *she strikes 'em down:* Plausible *and* Novel *take 'em up.*)

Oliv. So it seems, by giving her the cabinet.

L. Plau. These pendants appertain to your most faithful humble servant.

Nov. And this locket is mine; my earnest for love, which she never paid: therefore my own again.

Wid. By what law, sir, pray? — Cousin Olivia, a word. What, do they make a seizure on your goods and chattels, *vi et armis?* Make your demand, I say, and bring your trover, bring your trover. I'll follow the law for you.

Oliv. And I my revenge.

(*Exit* Olivia.)

Man. (*to* Vernish). But 'tis, my friend, in your consideration most, that I would have returned part of your wife's portion; for 'twere hard to take all from thee, since thou hast paid so dear for't, in being such a rascal. Yet thy wife is a fortune without a portion; and thou art a man of that extraordinary merit in villany, the world and fortune can never desert thee, though I do; therefore be not melancholy. Fare you well, sir. — (*Exit* Vernish *doggedly.*) Now, madam, (*turning to* Fidelia) I beg your pardon for lessening the present I made you; but my heart can never be lessened. This, I confess, was too small for you before; for you deserve the Indian world; and I would now go thither, out of covetousness for your sake only.

Fid. Your heart, sir, is a present of that value, I can never make any return to't; (*Pulling* Manly *from the company.*) but I can give you back such a present as this, which I got by the loss of my father, a gentleman of the north, of no mean extraction, whose only child I was, therefore left me in the present possession of two thousand pounds a-year; which I left, with multitudes of pretenders, to follow you, sir; having in several public places seen you, and observed your actions thoroughly, with admiration, when you were too much in love to take notice of mine, which yet was but too visible. The name of my family is Grey, my other, Fidelia. The rest of my story you shall know when I have fewer auditors.

Man. Nay, now, madam, you have taken from me all power of making you any compliment on my part; for I was going to tell you, that for your sake only I would quit the unknown pleasure of a retirement; and rather stay in this ill world of ours still, though odious to me, than give you more frights again at sea, and make again too great a venture there, in you alone. But if I should tell you now all this, and that your virtue (since greater than I thought any was in the world) had now reconciled me to't, my friend here would say, 'tis your estate that has made me friends with the world.

Free. I must confess I should; for I think most of our quarrels to the world are just such as we have to a handsome woman: only because we cannot enjoy her as we would do.

Man. Nay, if thou art a plain dealer too, give me thy hand; for now I'll say, I am thy friend indeed; and for your two sakes, though I have been so lately deceived in friends of both sexes, —

I will believe there are now in the world
Good-natured friends, who are not prostitutes,
And handsome women worthy to be friends;
Yet, for my sake, let no one e'er confide
In tears, or oaths, in love, or friend untried.
(*Exeunt omnes.*)

EPILOGUE

Spoken by the Widow Blackacre

To you, the judges learned in stage-laws,
Our poet now, by me, submits his cause;
For with young judges, such as most of you,
The men by women best their bus'ness do:
And, truth on't is, if you did not sit here,
To keep for us a term throughout the year,
We could not live by'r tongues; nay, but for you,
Our chamber-practice would be little too.
And 'tis not only the stage-practiser
Who by your meeting gets her living here;
For as in Hall of Westminster
Sleek sempstress vents amidst the courts her ware;
So, while we bawl, and you in judgment sit,
The visor-mask sells linen too i' th' pit.
Oh, many of your friends, besides us here,
Do live by putting off their several ware.
Here's daily done the great affair o' th' nation;
Let love and us then ne'er have long-vacation.
But hold; like other pleaders I have done
Not my poor client's bus'ness, but my own.
Spare me a word, then, now for him. First know,
Squires of the long robe, he does humbly show
He has a just right in abusing you,
Because he is a Brother-Templar too:
For at the bar you rally one another;
Nay, fool and knave, is swallowed from a brother:
If not the poet here, the Templar spare,
And maul him when you catch him at the bar.
From you, our common modish censurers,
Your favor, not your judgment, 'tis he fears:
Of all loves begs you then to rail, find fault;
For plays, like women, by the world are thought
(When you speak kindly of 'em) very naught.

ALL FOR LOVE
OR
THE WORLD WELL LOST
A TRAGEDY

By JOHN DRYDEN

(1678)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Mark Antony.
Ventidius, *his general.*
Dolabella, *his friend.*
Alexas, *the Queen's eunuch.*
Serapion, *Priest of Isis.*
[Myris,] *another priest.*
Servants to Antony.

Cleopatra, *Queen of Egypt.*
Octavia, *Antony's wife.*
Charmion, } *Cleopatra's maids.*
Iras, }
Antony's two little daughters.

Scene — Alexandria.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

THOMAS, EARL OF DANBY, Viscount Latimer, and Baron Osborne of Kiveton, in Yorkshire; Lord High Treasurer of England, one of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, etc.

My Lord,

The gratitude of poets is so troublesome a virtue to great men, that you are often in danger of your own benefits: for you are threatened with some epistle, and not suffered to do good in quiet, or to compound for their silence whom you have obliged. Yet, I confess, I neither am nor ought to be surprised at this indulgence; for your lordship has the same right to favor poetry which the great and noble have ever had.

Carmen amat, quisquis carmine digna gerit.

There is somewhat of a tie in nature betwixt those who are born for worthy actions, and those who can transmit them to posterity; and though ours be much the inferior part, it comes at least within the verge of alliance; nor are we unprofitable members of the commonwealth, when we animate others to those virtues, which we copy and describe from you.

'Tis indeed their interest, who endeavor the subversion of governments, to discourage poets and historians; for the best which can happen to them is to be forgotten. But such who, under kings, are the fathers of their country, and by a just and prudent ordering of affairs preserve it, have the same reason to cherish the chroniclers of their actions, as they have to lay up in safety the deeds and evidences of their estates; for such records are their undoubted titles to the love and reverence of after ages. Your lordship's administration has already taken up a considerable part of the English annals; and many of its most happy years are owing to it. His Majesty, the most knowing judge of men, and the best master, has acknowledged the ease and benefit he receives in the incomes of his treasury, which you found not only disordered, but exhausted. All things were in the confusion of a chaos, without form or method, if not reduced beyond it, even to annihilation; so that you had not only to separate the jarring elements, but (if that boldness of expression might be allowed me) to create them. Your enemies had so embroiled the management of your office, that they looked on your advancement as the instrument of your ruin. And as if the clogging of the revenue, and the confusion of accounts, which you found in your entrance, were not sufficient, they added their own weight of malice to the public calamity, by forestalling the credit which should cure it. Your friends on the other side were only capable of pitying, but not of aiding you; no further help or counsel was remaining to you, but what was founded on yourself; and that indeed was your security: for your diligence, your constancy, and your prudence, wrought most surely within, when they were not disturbed by any outward motion. The highest virtue is best to be trusted with itself; for assistance only can be given by a genius superior to that which it assists; and it is the noblest kind of debt, when we are only obliged to God and nature. This then, my lord, is your just commendation, that you have wrought out yourself a way to glory, by those very means that were designed for your destruction. You have not only restored, but advanced the revenues of your master, without grievance to the subject; and, as if that were little yet, the debts of the exchequer, which lay heaviest both on the crown, and on private persons, have by your conduct been established in a certainty of satisfaction. An action so much the more great and honorable, because the case was without the ordinary relief of laws, above the hopes of the afflicted, and beyond the narrowness of the treasury to redress, had it been managed by a less able hand. 'Tis certainly the happiest, and most unenvied part of all your fortune, to do good to many, while you do injury to none; to receive at once the prayers of the subject, and the praises of the prince; and, by the care of your conduct, to give him means of exerting the chiefest (if any be the chiefest) of his royal virtues, his distributive justice to the deserving, and his bounty and compassion to the wanting. The disposition of princes towards their people cannot better be discovered than in the choice of their ministers; who, like the animal spirits betwixt the soul and body, participate somewhat of both natures, and make the communication which is betwixt them. A king, who is just and moderate in his nature, who rules according to the laws, whom God has made happy by forming the temper of his soul to the constitution of his government, and who makes us happy, by assuming over us no other sovereignty than that wherein our welfare and liberty consists; a prince, I say, of so excellent a character, and so suitable to the wishes of all good men, could not better have conveyed himself into his people's apprehensions, than in your lordship's person; who so lively express the same virtues, that you seem not so much a copy, as an emanation of him. Moderation is doubtless an establishment of greatness; but there is a steadiness of temper which is likewise requisite in a minister of state; so equal a mixture of both virtues, that he may stand like an isthmus betwixt the two encroaching seas of arbitrary power and lawless anarchy. The undertaking would be difficult to any but an extraordinary genius, to stand at the line, and to divide the limits; to pay what is due to the great representative of the nation, and neither to enhance, nor to yield up, the undoubted prerogatives of the crown. These, my lord, are the proper virtues of a noble Englishman, as indeed they are properly English virtues; no people in the world being capable of using them, but we who have the happiness to be born under so equal, and so well-poised a government — a government which has all the advantages of liberty beyond a commonwealth, and all the marks of kingly sovereignty without the danger of a tyranny. Both my nature, as I am an Englishman, and my reason, as I am a man, have bred in me a loathing to that specious name of a republic: that mock appearance of a liberty, where all who have not part in the government, are slaves; and slaves they are of a viler note than such as are subjects to an absolute dominion. For no Christian monarchy is so absolute, but 'tis circumscribed with laws. But when the executive power is in the law-makers, there is no further check upon them; and the people must suffer without a remedy, because they are oppressed by their representatives. If I must serve, the number of my masters, who were born my equals, would but add to the ignominy of my bondage. The nature of our government, above all others, is exactly suited both to the situation of our country, and the temper of the natives; an island being more proper for commerce and for defence, than for extending its dominions on the Continent; for what the valor of its inhabitants might gain, by reason of its remoteness, and the casualties of the seas, it could not so easily preserve; and, therefore, neither the arbitrary power of one in a monarchy, nor of many in a commonwealth, could make us greater than we are. 'Tis true, that vaster and more frequent taxes might be gathered, when the consent of the people was not asked or needed; but this were only by conquering abroad, to be poor at home; and the examples of our neighbors teach us, that they are not always the happiest subjects whose kings extend their dominions farthest. Since, therefore, we cannot win by an offensive war, at least a land war, the model of our government seems naturally contrived for the defensive part; and the consent of a people is easily obtained to contribute to that power which must protect it. *Felices nimium, bona si sua nôrint, Angligenæ!* And yet there are not wanting malcontents amongst us, who, surfeiting themselves on too much happiness, would persuade the people that they might be happier by a change. 'Twas indeed the policy of their old forefather, when himself was fallen from the station of glory, to seduce mankind into the same rebellion with him, by telling him he might yet be freer than he was: that is, more free than his nature would allow, or (if I may so say) than God could make him. We have already all the liberty which freeborn subjects can enjoy, and all beyond it is but licence. But if it be liberty of conscience which they pretend, the moderation of our church is such, that its practice extends not to the severity of persecution, and its discipline is withal so easy, that it allows more freedom to dissenters than any of the sects would allow to it. In the meantime, what right can be pretended by these men to attempt innovations in church or state? Who made them the trustees, or (to speak a little nearer their own language) the keepers of the liberty of England? If their call be extraordinary, let them convince us by working miracles; for ordinary vocation they can have none to disturb the government under which they were born, and which protects them. He who has often changed his party, and always has made his interest the rule of it, gives little evidence of his sincerity for the public good. 'Tis manifest he changes but for himself, and takes the people for tools to work his fortune. Yet the experience of all ages might let him know, that they who trouble the waters first, have seldom the benefit of the fishing; as they who began the late rebellion enjoyed not the fruit of their undertaking, but were crushed themselves by the usurpation of their own instrument. Neither is it enough for them to answer that they only intend a reformation of the government, but not the subversion of it. On such pretences all insurrections have been founded: 'tis striking at the root of power, which is obedience. Every remonstrance of private men has the seed of treason in it; and discourses which are couched in ambiguous terms are therefore the more dangerous, because they do all the mischief of open sedition, yet are safe from the punishment of the laws. These, my lord, are considerations which I should not pass so lightly over, had I room to manage them as they deserve; for no man can be so inconsiderable in a nation, as not to have a share in the welfare of it; and if he be a true Englishman, he must at the same time be fired with indignation, and revenge himself as he can on the disturbers of his country. And to whom could I more fitly apply myself than to your lordship, who have not only an inborn, but an hereditary loyalty? The memorable constancy and sufferings of your father, almost to the ruin of his estate, for the royal cause, were an earnest of that which such a parent and such an institution would produce in the person of a son. But so unhappy an occasion of manifesting your own zeal in suffering for his present majesty, the providence of God, and the prudence of your administration, will, I hope, prevent; that, as your father's fortune waited on the unhappiness of his sovereign, so your own may participate of the better fate which attends his son. The relation which you have by alliance to the noble family of your lady, serves to confirm to you both this happy augury. For what can deserve a greater place in the English chronicle, than the loyalty and courage, the actions and death, of the general of an army, fighting for his prince and country? The honor and gallantry of the Earl of Lindsey is so illustrious a subject, that 'tis fit to adorn an heroic poem; for he was the proto-martyr of the cause, and the type of his unfortunate royal master.

Yet after all, my lord, if I may speak my thoughts, you are happy rather to us than to yourself; for the multiplicity, the cares, and the vexations of your employment, have betrayed you from yourself, and given you up into the possession of the public. You are robbed of your privacy and friends, and scarce any hour of your life you can call your own. Those who envy your fortune, if they wanted not good nature, might more justly pity it; and when they see you watched by a crowd of suitors, whose importunity 'tis impossible to avoid, would conclude, with reason, that you have lost much more in true content, than you have gained by dignity; and that a private gentleman is better attended by a single servant, than your lordship with so clamorous a train. Pardon me, my lord, if I speak like a philosopher on this subject; the fortune which makes a man uneasy, cannot make him happy; and a wise man must think himself uneasy, when few of his actions are in his choice.

This last consideration has brought me to another, and a very seasonable one for your relief; which is, that while I pity your want of leisure, I have impertinently detained you so long a time. I have put off my own business, which was my dedication, till 'tis so late, that I am now ashamed to begin it; and therefore I will say nothing of the poem, which I present to you, because I know not if you are like to have an hour, which, with a good conscience, you may throw away in perusing it; and for the author, I have only to beg the continuance of your protection to him, who is, my lord, your lordship's most obliged, most humble, and most obedient servant,

John Dryden

PREFACE

The death of Antony and Cleopatra is a subject which has been treated by the greatest wits of our nation, after Shakespeare; and by all so variously, that their example has given me the confidence to try myself in this bow of Ulysses amongst the crowd of suitors; and, withal, to take my own measures, in aiming at the mark. I doubt not but the same motive has prevailed with all of us in this attempt; I mean the excellency of the moral: for the chief persons represented were famous patterns of unlawful love; and their end accordingly was unfortunate. All reasonable men have long since concluded, that the hero of the poem ought not to be a character of perfect virtue, for then he could not, without injustice, be made unhappy; nor yet altogether wicked, because he could not then be pitied. I have therefore steered the middle course; and have drawn the character of Antony as favorably as Plutarch, Appian, and Dion Cassius would give me leave; the like I have observed in Cleopatra. That which is wanting to work up the pity to a greater height, was not afforded me by the story; for the crimes of love which they both committed were not occasioned by any necessity, or fatal ignorance, but were wholly voluntary; since our passions are, or ought to be, within our power. The fabric of the play is regular enough, as to the inferior parts of it; and the unities of time, place, and action, more exactly observed than, perhaps, the English theatre requires. Particularly, the action is so much one, that it is the only of the kind without episode, or underplot; every scene in the tragedy conducing to the main design, and every act concluding with a turn of it. The greatest error in the contrivance seems to be in the person of Octavia; for, though I might use the privilege of a poet, to introduce her into Alexandria, yet I had not enough considered that the compassion she moved to herself and children was destructive to that which I reserved for Antony and Cleopatra; whose mutual love being founded upon vice, must lessen the favor of the audience to them, when virtue and innocence were oppressed by it. And, though I justified Antony in some measure, by making Octavia's departure to proceed wholly from herself, yet the force of the first machine still remained; and the dividing of pity, like the cutting of a river into many channels, abated the strength of the natural stream. But this is an objection which none of my critics have urged against me; and therefore I might have let it pass, if I could have resolved to have been partial to myself. The faults my enemies have found are rather cavils concerning little and not essential decencies; which a master of the ceremonies may decide betwixt us. The French poets, I confess, are strict observers of these punctilios. They would not, for example, have suffered Cleopatra and Octavia to have met; or, if they had met, there must only have passed betwixt them some cold civilities, but no eagerness of repartee, for fear of offending against the greatness of their characters, and the modesty of their sex. This objection I foresaw, and at the same time contemned; for I judged it both natural and probable, that Octavia, proud of her new-gained conquest, would search out Cleopatra to triumph over her; and that Cleopatra, thus attacked, was not of a spirit to shun the encounter. And 'tis not unlikely that two exasperated rivals should use such satire as I have put into their mouths; for, after all, though the one were a Roman, and the other a queen, they were both women. 'Tis true, some actions, though natural, are not fit to be represented; and broad obscenities in words ought in good manners to be avoided: expressions therefore are a modest clothing of our thoughts, as breeches and petticoats are of our bodies. If I have kept myself within the bounds of modesty, all beyond it is but nicety and affectation; which is no more but modesty depraved into a vice. They betray themselves who are too quick of apprehension in such cases, and leave all reasonable men to imagine worse of them, than of the poet.

Honest Montaigne goes yet farther: *Nous ne sommes que cérémonie; la cérémonie nous emporte, et laissons la substance des choses. Nous nous tenons aux branches, et abandonnons le tronc et le corps. Nous avons appris aux dames de rougir, oyans seulement nommer ce qu'elles ne craignent aucunement à faire: Nous n'osons appeller à droit nos membres, et ne craignons pas de les employer à toute sorte de débauche. La cérémonie nous défend d'exprimer par paroles les choses licites et naturelles, et nous l'en croyons; la raison nous défend de n'en faire point d'illicites et mauvaises, et personne ne l'en croit.* My comfort is, that by this opinion my enemies are but sucking critics, who would fain be nibbling ere their teeth are come.

Yet, in this nicety of manners does the excellency of French poetry consist. Their heroes are the most civil people breathing; but their good breeding seldom extends to a word of sense. All their wit is in their ceremony; they want the genius which animates our stage; and therefore 'tis but necessary, when they cannot please, that they should take care not to offend. But as the civilest man in the company is commonly the dullest, so these authors, while they are afraid to make you laugh or cry, out of pure good manners make you sleep. They are so careful not to exasperate a critic, that they never leave him any work; so busy with the broom, and make so clean a riddance, that there is little left either for censure or for praise. For no part of a poem is worth our discommending, where the whole is insipid; as when we have once tasted of palled wine, we stay not to examine it glass by glass. But while they affect to shine in trifles, they are often careless in essentials. Thus, their Hippolytus is so scrupulous in point of decency, that he will rather expose himself to death, than accuse his stepmother to his father; and my critics I am sure will commend him for it. But we of grosser apprehensions are apt to think that this excess of generosity is not practicable but with fools and madmen. This was good manners with a vengeance; and the audience is like to be much concerned at the misfortunes of this admirable hero. But take Hippolytus out of his poetic fit, and I suppose he would think it a wiser part to set the saddle on the right horse, and choose rather to live with the reputation of a plain-spoken, honest man, than to die with the infamy of an incestuous villain. In the meantime we may take notice, that where the poet ought to have preserved the character as it was delivered to us by antiquity, when he should have given us the picture of a rough young man, of the Amazonian strain, a jolly huntsman, and both by his profession and his early rising a mortal enemy to love, he has chosen to give him the turn of gallantry, sent him to travel from Athens to Paris, taught him to make love, and transformed the Hippolytus of Euripides into Monsieur Hippolyte. I should not have troubled myself thus far with French poets, but that I find our *Chedreux* critics wholly form their judgments by them. But for my part, I desire to be tried by the laws of my own country; for it seems unjust to me, that the French should prescribe here, till they have conquered. Our little sonneteers, who follow them, have too narrow souls to judge of poetry. Poets themselves are the most proper, though I conclude not the only critics. But till some genius, as universal as Aristotle, shall arise, one who can penetrate into all arts and sciences, without the practice of them, I shall think it reasonable that the judgment of an artificer in his own art should be preferable to the opinion of another man; at least where he is not bribed by interest, or prejudiced by malice. And this, I suppose, is manifest by plain induction. For, first, the crowd cannot be presumed to have more than a gross instinct of what pleases or displeases them. Every man will grant me this; but then, by a particular kindness to himself, he draws his own stake first, and will be distinguished from the multitude, of which other men may think him one. But, if I come closer to those who are allowed for witty men, either by the advantage of their quality, or by common fame, and affirm that neither are they qualified to decide sovereignly concerning poetry, I shall yet have a strong party of my opinion; for most of them severally will exclude the rest, either from the number of witty men, or at least of able judges. But here again they are all indulgent to themselves; and every one who believes himself a wit, that is, every man, will pretend at the same time to a right of judging. But to press it yet further, there are many witty men, but few poets; neither have all poets a taste of tragedy. And this is the rock on which they are daily splitting. Poetry, which is a picture of nature, must generally please; but 'tis not to be understood that all parts of it must please every man; therefore is not tragedy to be judged by a witty man whose taste is only confined to comedy. Nor is every man who loves tragedy a sufficient judge of it; he must understand the excellencies of it too, or he will only prove a blind admirer, not a critic. From hence it comes that so many satires on poets, and censures of their writings, fly abroad. Men of pleasant conversation (at least esteemed so), and endued with a trifling kind of fancy, perhaps helped out with some smattering of Latin, are ambitious to distinguish themselves from the herd of gentlemen, by their poetry —

> *Rarus enim fermè sensus communis in illâ*
> *Fortunâ.*

And is not this a wretched affectation, not to be contented with what fortune has done for them, and sit down quietly with their estates, but they must call their wits in question, and needlessly expose their nakedness to public view? Not considering that they are not to expect the same approbation from sober men, which they have found from their flatterers after the third bottle? If a little glittering in discourse has passed them on us for witty men, where was the necessity of undeceiving the world? Would a man who has an ill title to an estate, but yet is in possession of it, would he bring it of his own accord to be tried at Westminster? We who write, if we want the talent, yet have the excuse that we do it for a poor subsistence; but what can be urged in their defence, who, not having the vocation of poverty to scribble, out of mere wantonness take pains to make themselves ridiculous? Horace was certainly in the right where he said that "no man is satisfied with his own condition." A poet is not pleased, because he is not rich; and the rich are discontented, because the poets will not admit them of their number. Thus the case is hard with writers. If they succeed not, they must starve; and if they do, some malicious satire is prepared to level them for daring to please without their leave. But while they are so eager to destroy the fame of others, their ambition is manifest in their concernment; some poem of their own is to be produced, and the slaves are to be laid flat with their faces on the ground, that the monarch may appear in the greater majesty.

Dionysius and Nero had the same longings, but with all their power they could never bring their business well about. 'Tis true, they proclaimed themselves poets by sound of trumpet; and poets they were, upon pain of death to any man who durst call them otherwise. The audience had a fine time on't, you may imagine; they sate in a bodily fear, and looked as demurely as they could: for 'twas a hanging matter to laugh unseasonably; and the tyrants were suspicious, as they had reason, that their subjects had 'em in the wind; so, every man, in his own defence, set as good a face upon the business as he could. 'Twas known beforehand that the monarchs were to be crowned laureates; but when the show was over, and an honest man was suffered to depart quietly, he took out his laughter which he had stifled, with a firm resolution never more to see an emperor's play, though he had been ten years a-making it. In the meantime the true poets were they who made the best markets; for they had wit enough to yield the prize with a good grace, and not contend with him who had thirty legions. They were sure to be rewarded, if they confessed themselves bad writers, and that was somewhat better than to be martyrs for their reputation. Lucan's example was enough to teach them manners; and after he was put to death, for overcoming Nero, the emperor carried it without dispute for the best poet in his dominions. No man was ambitious of that grinning honor; for if he heard the malicious trumpeter proclaiming his name before his betters, he knew there was but one way with him. Mæcenas took another course, and we know he was more than a great man, for he was witty too: but finding himself far gone in poetry, which Seneca assures us was not his talent, he thought it his best way to be well with Virgil and with Horace; that at least he might be a poet at the second hand; and we see how happily it has succeeded with him; for his own bad poetry is forgotten, and their panegyrics of him still remain. But they who should be our patrons are for no such expensive ways to fame; they have much of the poetry of Mæcenas, but little of his liberality. They are for persecuting Horace and Virgil, in the persons of their successors, (for such is every man who has any part of their soul and fire, though in a less degree). Some of their little zanies yet go farther; for they are persecutors even of Horace himself, as far as they are able, by their ignorant and vile imitations of him; by making an unjust use of his authority, and turning his artillery against his friends. But how would he disdain to be copied by such hands! I dare answer for him, he would be more uneasy in their company, than he was with Crispinus, their forefather, in the Holy Way; and would no more have allowed them a place amongst the critics, than he would Demetrius the mimic, and Tigellius the buffoon;

——— Demetri, teque, Tigelli,
Discipulorum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.

With what scorn would he look down on such miserable translators, who make dogg'rel of his Latin, mistake his meaning, misapply his censures, and often contradict their own? He is fixed as a landmark to set out the bounds of poetry, —

——— Saxum antiquum ingens, —
Limes agro positus, litem ut discerneret arvis.

But other arms than theirs, and other sinews are required, to raise the weight of such an author; and when they would toss him against enemies, —

Genua labant, gelidus concrevit frigore sanguis.
Tum lapis ipse viri vacuum per inane volutus,
Nec spatium evasit totum, nec pertulit ictum.

For my part, I would wish no other revenge, either for myself, or the rest of the poets, from this rhyming judge of the twelve-penny gallery, this legitimate son of Sternhold, than that he would subscribe his name to his censure, or (not to tax him beyond his learning) set his mark. For, should he own himself publicly, and come from behind the lion's skin, they whom he condemns would be thankful to him, they whom he praises would choose to be condemned; and the magistrates whom he has elected would modestly withdraw from their employment, to avoid the scandal of his nomination. The sharpness of his satire, next to himself, falls most heavily on his friends, and they ought never to forgive him for commending them perpetually the wrong way, and sometimes by contraries. If he have a friend whose hastiness in writing is his greatest fault, Horace would have taught him to have minced the matter, and to have called it readiness of thought, and a flowing fancy; for friendship will allow a man to christen an imperfection by the name of some neighbor virtue:

Vellem in amicitiâ sic erraremus; et isti
Errori nomen virtus posuisset honestum.

But he would never have allowed him to have called a slow man hasty, or a hasty writer a slow drudge, as Juvenal explains it:

——— *Canibus pigris, scabieque vetustâ*
Lævibus, et siccæ lambentibus ora lucernæ,
Nomen erit Pardus, Tigris, Leo; si quid adhuc est
Quod fremit in terris violentius.

Yet Lucretius laughs at a foolish lover, even for excusing the imperfections of his mistress:

Nigra μελίχροος est, immunda et fœtida ἄκοσμος.
Balba loqui non quit, τραυλίζει; muta pudens est, etc.

But to drive it *ad Æthiopem cygnum* is not to be endured. I leave him to interpret this by the benefit of his French version on the other side, and without farther considering him, than I have the rest of my illiterate censors, whom I have disdained to answer, because they are not qualified for judges. It remains that I acquaint the reader, that I have endeavored in this play to follow the practice of the ancients, who, as Mr. Rymer has judiciously observed, are and ought to be our masters. Horace likewise gives it for a rule in his art of poetry,

——— *Vos exemplaria Græca*
Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.

Yet, though their models are regular, they are too little for English tragedy; which requires to be built in a larger compass. I could give an instance in the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, which was the masterpiece of Sophocles; but I reserve it for a more fit occasion, which I hope to have hereafter. In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare; which that I might perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme. Not that I condemn my former way, but that this is more proper to my present purpose. I hope I need not to explain myself, that I have not copied my author servilely. Words and phrases must of necessity receive a change in succeeding ages; but 'tis almost a miracle that much of his language remains so pure; and that he who began dramatic poetry amongst us, untaught by any, and as Ben Jonson tells us, without learning, should by the force of his own genius perform so much, that in a manner he has left no praise for any who come after him. The occasion is fair, and the subject would be pleasant to handle the difference of styles betwixt him and Fletcher, and wherein, and how far they are both to be imitated. But since I must not be over-confident of my own performance after him, it will be prudence in me to be silent. Yet, I hope, I may affirm, and without vanity, that, by imitating him, I have excelled myself throughout the play; and particularly, that I prefer the scene betwixt Antony and Ventidius in the first act, to anything which I have written in this kind.

PROLOGUE

What flocks of critics hover here to-day,
As vultures wait on armies for their prey,
All gaping for the carcass of a play!
With croaking notes they bode some dire event,
And follow dying poets by the scent.
Ours gives himself for gone; y' have watched your time!
He fights this day unarmed, — without his rhyme; —
And brings a tale which often has been told,
As sad as Dido's; and almost as old.
His hero, whom you wits his bully call,
Bates of his mettle, and scarce rants at all:
He's somewhat lewd; but a well-meaning mind;
Weeps much; fights little; but is wond'rous kind.
In short, a pattern, and companion fit,
For all the keeping Tonies of the pit.
I could name more: a wife, and mistress too;
Both (to be plain) too good for most of you:
The wife well-natured, and the mistress true.
  Now, poets, if your fame has been his care,
Allow him all the candor you can spare.
A brave man scorns to quarrel once a day;
Like Hectors in at every petty fray.
Let those find fault whose wit's so very small,
They've need to show that they can think at all;
Errors like straws upon the surface flow;
He who would search for pearls must dive below.
Fops may have leave to level all they can,
As pigmies would be glad to lop a man.
Half-wits are fleas; so little and so light,
We scarce could know they live, but that they bite.
But, as the rich, when tired with daily feasts,
For change, become their next poor tenant's guests;
Drink hearty draughts of ale from plain brown bowls,
And snatch the homely rasher from the coals:
So you, retiring from much better cheer,
For once, may venture to do penance here.
And since that plenteous autumn now is past,
Whose grapes and peaches have indulged your taste,
Take in good part, from our poor poet's board,
Such rivelled fruits as winter can afford.

ALL FOR LOVE
OR
THE WORLD WELL LOST
A TRAGEDY

ACT I.

Scene — *The Temple of Isis.*

(*Enter* Serapion, Myris, *Priests of Isis.*)

Serap. Portents and prodigies are grown so frequent,
That they have lost their name. Our fruitful Nile
Flowed ere the wonted season, with a torrent
So unexpected, and so wondrous fierce,
That the wild deluge overtook the haste
Ev'n of the hinds that watched it; men and beasts
Were borne above the tops of trees, that grew
On the utmost margin of the water-mark.
Then, with so swift an ebb the flood drove backward,
It slipt from underneath the scaly herd:
Here monstrous phocæ panted on the shore;
Forsaken dolphins there with their broad tails,
Lay lashing the departing waves: hard by 'em,
Sea horses flound'ring in the slimy mud,
Tossed up their heads, and dashed the ooze about 'em.

(*Enter* Alexas *behind them.*)

Myr. Avert these omens, Heav'n!
Serap. Last night, between the hours of twelve and one,
In a lone aisle o' th' temple while I walked,
A whirlwind rose, that, with a violent blast,
Shook all the dome: the doors around me clapt;
The iron wicket, that defends the vault,
Where the long race of Ptolemies is laid,
Burst open, and disclosed the mighty dead.
From out each monument, in order placed,
An armed ghost start[s] up: the boy-king last
Reared his inglorious head. A peal of groans
Then followed, and a lamentable voice
Cried, "Egypt is no more!" My blood ran back,
My shaking knees against each other knocked;
On the cold pavement down I fell entranced,
And so unfinished left the horrid scene.
Alex. (*showing himself*). And dreamed you this? or did invent the story,
To frighten our Egyptian boys withal,
And train 'em up betimes in fear of priesthood?
Serap. My lord, I saw you not,
Nor meant my words should reach your ears; but what
I uttered was most true.
Alex. A foolish dream,
Bred from the fumes of indigested feasts,
And holy luxury.
Serap. I know my duty:
This goes no farther.
Alex. 'Tis not fit it should;
Nor would the times now bear it, were it true.
All southern, from yon hills, the Roman camp
Hangs o'er us black and threat'ning, like a storm
Just breaking on our heads.
Serap. Our faint Egyptians pray for Antony;

But in their servile hearts they own Octavius.
Myr. Why then does Antony dream out his hours,
And tempts not fortune for a noble day,
Which might redeem what Actium lost?
Alex. He thinks ’tis past recovery.
Serap. Yet the foe
Seems not to press the siege.
Alex. Oh, there’s the wonder.
Mæcenas and Agrippa, who can most
With Cæsar, are his foes. His wife Octavia,
Driv’n from his house, solicits her revenge;
And Dolabella, who was once his friend,
Upon some private grudge, now seeks his ruin:
Yet still war seems on either side to sleep.
Serap. ’Tis strange that Antony, for some days past,
Has not beheld the face of Cleopatra;
But here, in Isis’ temple, lives retired,
And makes his heart a prey to black despair.
Alex. ’Tis true; and we much fear he hopes by absence
To cure his mind of love.
Serap. If he be vanquished,
Or make his peace, Egypt is doomed to be
A Roman province; and our plenteous harvests
Must then redeem the scarceness of their soil.
While Antony stood firm, our Alexandria
Rivalled proud Rome (dominion’s other seat),
And Fortune striding, like a vast Colossus,
Could fix an equal foot of empire here.
Alex. Had I my wish, these tyrants of all nature
Who lord it o’er mankind, should perish, — perish,
Each by the other’s sword; but, since our will
Is lamely followed by our pow’r, we must
Depend on one; with him to rise or fall.
Serap. How stands the queen affected?
Alex. Oh, she dotes,
She dotes, Serapion, on this vanquished man,
And winds herself about his mighty ruins;
Whom would she yet forsake, yet yield him up,
This hunted prey, to his pursuers’ hands,
She might preserve us all; but ’tis in vain —
This changes my designs, this blasts my counsels,
And makes me use all means to keep him here,
Whom I could wish divided from her arms
Far as the earth’s deep centre. Well, you know
The state of things; no more of your ill omens
And black prognostics; labor to confirm
The people’s hearts.

(*Enter* Ventidius, *talking aside with a Gentleman of* Antony’s.)

Serap. These Romans will o’erhear us.
But, who’s that stranger? By his warlike port,
His fierce demeanor, and erected look,
He’s of no vulgar note.
Alex. Oh, ’tis Ventidius,
Our emp’ror’s great lieutenant in the East,
Who first showed Rome that Parthia could be conquered.
When Antony returned from Syria last,
He left this man to guard the Roman frontiers.
Serap. You seem to know him well.
Alex. Too well. I saw him in Cilicia first,
When Cleopatra there met Antony:
A mortal foe he was to us, and Egypt.
But, let me witness to the worth I hate,
A braver Roman never drew a sword;
Firm to his prince, but as a friend, not slave.
He ne’er was of his pleasures; but presides
O’er all his cooler hours, and morning counsels:
In short the plainness, fierceness, rugged virtue
Of an old true-stamped Roman lives in him.
His coming bodes I know not what of ill
To our affairs. Withdraw, to mark him better;
And I’ll acquaint you why I sought you here,

And what's our present work.
(*They withdraw to a corner of the stage; and* VENTIDIUS, *with the other, comes forward to the front.*)
VENT. Not see him, say you?
I say, I must, and will.
GENT. He has commanded,
On pain of death, none should approach his presence.
VENT. I bring him news will raise his drooping spirits,
Give him new life.
GENT. He sees not Cleopatra.
VENT. Would he had never seen her!
GENT. He eats not, drinks not, sleeps not, has no use
Of anything, but thought; or, if he talks,
'Tis to himself, and then 'tis perfect raving:
Then he defies the world, and bids it pass;
Sometimes he gnaws his lip, and curses loud
The boy Octavius; then he draws his mouth
Into a scornful smile, and cries, "Take all,
The world's not worth my care."
VENT. Just, just his nature.
Virtue's his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow
For his vast soul; and then he starts out wide,
And bounds into a vice that bears him far
From his first course, and plunges him in ills:
But, when his danger makes him find his fault,
Quick to observe, and full of sharp remorse,
He censures eagerly his own misdeeds,
Judging himself with malice to himself,
And not forgiving what as man he did,
Because his other parts are more than man.
He must not thus be lost.
(ALEXAS *and the Priests come forward.*)
ALEX. You have your full instructions, now advance;
Proclaim your orders loudly.
SERAP. Romans, Egyptians, hear the queen's command.
Thus Cleopatra bids: "Let labor cease,
To pomp and triumphs give this happy day,
That gave the world a lord: 'tis Antony's."
Live, Antony; and Cleopatra live!
Be this the general voice sent up to heav'n,
And every public place repeat this echo.
VENT. (*aside*). Fine pageantry!
SERAP. Set out before your doors
The images of all your sleeping fathers,
With laurels crowned; with laurels wreathe your posts,
And strow with flow'rs the pavement; let the priests
Do present sacrifice; pour out the wine,
And call the gods to join with you in gladness.
VENT. Curse on the tongue that bids this general joy!
Can they be friends of Antony, who revel
When Antony's in danger? Hide, for shame,
You Romans, your great grandsires' images,
For fear their souls should animate their marbles,
To blush at their degenerate progeny.
ALEX. A love which knows no bounds to Antony,
Would mark the day with honors, when all heaven
Labored for him, when each propitious star
Stood wakeful in his orb, to watch that hour,
And shed his better influence. Her own birthday
Our queen neglected, like a vulgar fate
That passed obscurely by.
VENT. Would it had slept,
Divided far from his; till some remote
And future age had called it out, to ruin
Some other prince, not him.
ALEX. Your emperor,
Though grown unkind, would be more gentle, than
T' upbraid my queen for loving him too well.
VENT. Does the mute sacrifice upbraid the priest?
He knows him not his executioner.
Oh, she has decked his ruin with her love,
Led him in golden bands to gaudy slaughter,

And made perdition pleasing; she has left him
The blank of what he was;
I tell thee, eunuch, she has quite unmanned him.
Can any Roman see, and know him now,
Thus altered from the lord of half mankind,
Unbent, unsinewed, made a woman’s toy,
Shrunk from the vast extent of all his honors,
And cramped within a corner of the world?
O Antony!
Thou bravest soldier, and thou best of friends!
Bounteous as nature; next to nature’s God!
Couldst thou but make new worlds, so wouldst thou give ’em,
As bounty were thy being: rough in battle,
As the first Romans when they went to war;
Yet, after victory, more pitiful
Than all their praying virgins left at home!
Alex. Would you could add, to those more shining virtues,
His truth to her who loves him.
Vent. Would I could not!
But wherefore waste I precious hours with thee?
Thou art her darling mischief, her chief engine,
Antony’s other fate. Go, tell thy queen,
Ventidius is arrived, to end her charms.
Let your Egyptian timbrels play alone;
Nor mix effeminate sounds with Roman trumpets.
You dare not fight for Antony; go pray,
And keep your cowards’ holiday in temples.
(*Exeunt* Alexas, Serapion.)

(*Enter* [*a second*] *Gentleman of* M. Antony.)

2 Gent. The emperor approaches, and commands,
On pain of death, that none presume to stay.
1 Gent. I dare not disobey him.
(*Going out with the other.*)
Vent. Well, I dare.
But I’ll observe him first unseen, and find
Which way his humor drives: the rest I’ll venture. (*Withdraws.*)

(*Enter* Antony, *walking with a disturbed motion before he speaks.*)

Ant. They tell me, ’tis my birthday, and I’ll keep it
With double pomp of sadness.
’Tis what the day deserves, which gave me breath.
Why was I raised the meteor of the world,
Hung in the skies, and blazing as I travelled,
Till all my fires were spent; and then cast downward
To be trod out by Cæsar?
Vent. (*aside*). On my soul,
’Tis mournful, wond’rous mournful!
Ant. Count thy gains.
Now, Antony, wouldst thou be born for this?
Glutton of fortune, thy devouring youth
Has starved thy wanting age.
Vent. (*aside*). How sorrow shakes him!
So, now the tempest tears him up by th’ roots,
And on the ground extends the noble ruin.
Ant. (*having thrown himself down*). Lie there, thou shadow of an emperor;
The place thou pressest on thy mother earth
Is all thy empire now: now it contains thee;
Some few days hence, and then ’twill be too large,
When thou’rt contracted in thy narrow urn,
Shrunk to a few cold ashes; then Octavia
(For Cleopatra will not live to see it),
Octavia then will have thee all her own,
And bear thee in her widowed hand to Cæsar;
Cæsar will weep, the crocodile will weep,
To see his rival of the universe
Lie still and peaceful there. I’ll think no more on’t.
Give me some music; look that it be sad:
I’ll soothe my melancholy, till I swell,
And burst myself with sighing. —
(*Soft music.*)
’Tis somewhat to my humor. Stay, I fancy

I'm now turned wild, a commoner of nature,
Of all forsaken, and forsaking all;
Live in a shady forest's sylvan scene,
Stretched at my length beneath some blasted oak
I lean my head upon the mossy bark,
And look just of a piece as I grew from it;
My uncombed locks, matted like mistletoe,
Hang o'er my hoary face; a murm'ring brook
Runs at my foot.
VENT. Methinks I fancy
Myself there too.
ANT. The herd come jumping by me,
And, fearless, quench their thirst, while I look on,
And take me for their fellow-citizen.
More of this image, more; it lulls my thoughts. (*Soft music again.*)
VENT. I must disturb him; I can hold no longer. (*Stands before him.*)
ANT. (*starting up*). Art thou Ventidius?
VENT. Are you Antony?
I'm liker what I was, than you to him
I left you last.
ANT. I'm angry.
VENT. So am I.
ANT. I would be private: leave me.
VENT. Sir, I love you,
And therefore will not leave you.
ANT. Will not leave me!
Where have you learnt that answer? Who am I?
VENT. My emperor; the man I love next heaven;
If I said more, I think 'twere scarce a sin;
Y'are all that's good, and god-like.
ANT. All that's wretched.
You will not leave me then?
VENT. 'Twas too presuming
To say I would not; but I dare not leave you;
And, 'tis unkind in you to chide me hence
So soon, when I so far have come to see you.
ANT. Now thou hast seen me, art thou satisfied?
For, if a friend, thou hast beheld enough;
And, if a foe, too much.
VENT. (*weeping*). Look, emperor, this is no common dew.
I have not wept this forty year; but now
My mother comes afresh into my eyes;
I cannot help her softness.
ANT. By heav'n, he weeps, poor good old man, he weeps!
The big round drops course one another down
The furrows of his cheeks. Stop 'em, Ventidius,
Or I shall blush to death; they set my shame,
That caused 'em, full before me.
VENT. I'll do my best.
ANT. Sure there's contagion in the tears of friends:
See, I have caught it too. Believe me, 'tis not
For my own griefs, but thine. — Nay, father.
VENT. Emperor.
ANT. Emperor! Why, that's the style of victory;
The conqu'ring soldier, red with unfelt wounds,
Salutes his general so: but never more
Shall that sound reach my ears.
VENT. I warrant you.
ANT. Actium, Actium! Oh! ——
VENT. It sits too near you.
ANT. Here, here it lies; a lump of lead by day,
And, in my short, distracted, nightly slumbers,
The hag that rides my dreams. ——
VENT. Out with it; give it vent.
ANT. Urge not my shame.
I lost a battle.
VENT. So has Julius done.
ANT. Thou favor'st me, and speak'st not half thou think'st;
For Julius fought it out, and lost it fairly:
But Antony ——
VENT. Nay, stop not.
ANT. Antony,
(Well, thou wilt have it) like a coward, fled,
Fled while his soldiers fought: fled first, Ventidius.
Thou long'st to curse me, and I give thee leave.

I know thou cam'st prepared to rail.
Vent. I did.
Ant. I'll help thee. — I have been a man, Ventidius —
Vent. Yes, and a brave one; but ——
Ant. I know thy meaning.
But I have lost my reason, have disgraced
The name of soldier, with inglorious ease.
In the full vintage of my flowing honors,
Sat still, and saw it pressed by other hands.
Fortune came smiling to my youth, and wooed it,
And purple greatness met my ripened years.
When first I came to empire, I was borne
On tides of people, crowding to my triumphs,
The wish of nations; and the willing world
Received me as its pledge of future peace;
I was so great, so happy, so beloved,
Fate could not ruin me; till I took pains,
And worked against my fortune, chid her from me,
And turned her loose; yet still she came again.
My careless days, and my luxurious nights,
At length have wearied her, and now she's gone,
Gone, gone, divorced for ever. Help me, soldier,
To curse this madman, this industrious fool,
Who labored to be wretched: pr'ythee, curse me.
Vent. No.
Ant. Why?
Vent. You are too sensible already
Of what y'have done, too conscious of your failings;
And, like a scorpion, whipped by others first
To fury, sting yourself in mad revenge.
I would bring balm, and pour it in your wounds,
Cure your distempered mind, and heal your fortunes.
Ant. I know thou would'st.
Vent. I will,
Ant. Ha, ha, ha, ha!
Vent. You laugh.
Ant. I do, to see officious love
Give cordials to the dead.
Vent. You would be lost, then?
Ant. I am.
Vent. I say you are not. Try your fortune.
Ant. I have, to th' utmost. Dost thou think me desperate,
Without just cause? No, when I found all lost
Beyond repair, I hid me from the world,
And learned to scorn it here; which now I do
So heartily, I think it is not worth
The cost of keeping.
Vent. Cæsar thinks not so;
He'll thank you for the gift he could not take.
You would be killed like Tully, would you? Do,
Hold out your throat to Cæsar, and die tamely.
Ant. No, I can kill myself; and so resolve.
Vent. I can die with you too, when time shall serve;
But fortune calls upon us now to live,
To fight, to conquer.
Ant. Sure thou dream'st, Ventidius.
Vent. No; 'tis you dream; you sleep away your hours
In desperate sloth, miscalled philosophy.
Up, up, for honor's sake; twelve legions wait you,
And long to call you chief; by painful journeys
I led 'em, patient both of heat and hunger,
Down from the Parthian marches to the Nile.
'Twill do you good to see their sunburned faces,
Their scarred cheeks, and chopped hands; there's virtue in 'em.
They'll sell those mangled limbs at dearer rates
Than yon trim bands can buy.
Ant. Where left you them?
Vent. I said in Lower Syria.
Ant. Bring 'em hither;
There may be life in these.
Vent. They will not come.
Ant. Why didst thou mock my hopes with promised aids,

To double my despair? They're mutinous.
Vent. Most firm and loyal.
Ant. Yet they will not march
To succor me. O trifler!
Vent. They petition
You would make haste to head 'em.
Ant. I'm besieged.
Vent. There's but one way shut up: how came I hither?
Ant. I will not stir.
Vent. They would perhaps desire
A better reason.
Ant. I have never used
My soldiers to demand a reason of
My actions. Why did they refuse to march?
Vent. They said they would not fight for Cleopatra.
Ant. What was't they said?
Vent. They said they would not fight for Cleopatra.
Why should they fight indeed, to make her conquer,
And make you more a slave? to gain you kingdoms,
Which, for a kiss, at your next midnight feast,
You'll sell to her? Then she new-names her jewels,
And calls this diamond such or such a tax;
Each pendant in her ear shall be a province.
Ant. Ventidius, I allow your tongue free license
On all my other faults; but, on your life,
No word of Cleopatra; she deserves
More worlds than I can lose.
Vent. Behold, you Pow'rs,
To whom you have intrusted humankind;
See Europe, Afric, Asia, put in balance,
And all weighed down by one light, worthless woman!
I think the gods are Antonies, and give,
Like prodigals, this nether world away
To none but wasteful hands.
Ant. You grow presumptuous.
Vent. I take the privilege of plain love to speak.
Ant. Plain love! plain arrogance, plain insolence!
Thy men are cowards; thou, an envious traitor,
Who, under seeming honesty, hast vented
The burden of thy rank, o'erflowing gall.
Oh, that thou wert my equal, great in arms
As the first Cæsar was, that I might kill thee
Without a stain to honor!
Vent. You may kill me;
You have done more already, — called me traitor.
Ant. Art thou not one?
Vent. For showing you yourself,
Which none else durst have done? but had I been
That name, which I disdain to speak again,
I needed not have sought your abject fortunes,
Come to partake your fate, to die with you.
What hindered me t' have led my conqu'ring eagles
To fill Octavius's bands? I could have been
A traitor then, a glorious, happy traitor,
And not have been so called.
Ant. Forgive me, soldier,
I've been too passionate.
Vent. You thought me false;
Thought my old age betrayed you. Kill me, sir;
Pray, kill me; yet you need not, your unkindness
Has left your sword no work.
Ant. I did not think so;
I said it in my rage: pr'ythee, forgive me.
Why didst thou tempt my anger, by discovery
Of what I would not hear?
Vent. No prince but you
Could merit that sincerity I used,
Nor durst another man have ventured it;
But you, ere love misled your wand'ring eyes,
Were sure the chief and best of human race,
Framed in the very pride and boast of nature;
So perfect, that the gods, who formed you, wondered
At their own skill, and cried, "A lucky hit
Has mended our design." Their envy hindered,

Else you had been immortal, and a pattern,
When heav'n would work for ostentation sake,
To copy out again.
Ant. But Cleopatra —
Go on; for I can bear it now.
Vent. No more.
Ant. Thou dar'st not trust my passion, but thou may'st;
Thou only lov'st, the rest have flattered me.
Vent. Heav'n's blessing on your heart for that kind word!
May I believe you love me? Speak again.
Ant. Indeed I do. Speak this, and this, and this. (*Hugging him.*)
Thy praises were unjust; but, I'll deserve 'em,
And yet mend all. Do with me what thou wilt;
Lead me to victory, thou know'st the way.
Vent. And, will you leave this ——
Ant. Pr'ythee, do not curse her,
And I will leave her; though, heav'n knows, I love
Beyond life, conquest, empire, all but honor;
But I will leave her.
Vent. That's my royal master;
And, shall we fight?
Ant. I warrant thee, old soldier,
Thou shalt behold me once again in iron;
And at the head of our old troops, that beat
The Parthians, cry aloud, "Come, follow me!"
Vent. Oh, now I hear my emperor! in that word
Octavius fell. Gods, let me see that day,
And, if I have ten years behind, take all;
I'll thank you for th' exchange.
Ant. O Cleopatra!
Vent. Again?
Ant. I've done: in that last sigh she went.
Cæsar shall know what 'tis to force a lover
From all he holds most dear.
Vent. Methinks you breathe
Another soul: your looks are more divine;
You speak a hero, and you move a god.
Ant. Oh, thou hast fired me; my soul's up in arms,
And mans each part about me. Once again,
That noble eagerness of fight has seized me;
That eagerness with which I darted upward
To Cassius's camp; in vain the steepy hill
Opposed my way; in vain a war of spears
Sung round my head, and planted all my shield;
I won the trenches, while my foremost men
Lagged on the plain below.
Vent. Ye gods, ye gods,
For such another hour!
Ant. Come on, my soldier!
Our hearts and arms are still the same: I long
Once more to meet our foes, that thou and I,
Like Time and Death, marching before our troops,
May taste fate to 'em; mow 'em out a passage,
And, ent'ring where the foremost squadrons yield,
Begin the noble harvest of the field.
(*Exeunt.*)

ACT II.

([*Enter*] Cleopatra, Iras, *and* Alexas.)

Cleo. What shall I do, or whither shall I turn?
Ventidius has o'ercome, and he will go.
Alex. He goes to fight for you.
Cleo. Then he would see me, ere he went to fight.
Flatter me not; if once he goes, he's lost,
And all my hopes destroyed.
Alex. Does this weak passion
Become a mighty queen?
Cleo. I am no queen:
Is this to be a queen, to be besieged
By yon insulting Roman, and to wait
Each hour the victor's chain? These ills are small:
For Antony is lost, and I can mourn
For nothing else but him. Now come, Octavius,

I have no more to lose; prepare thy bands;
I'm fit to be a captive; Antony
Has taught my mind the fortune of a slave.
IRAS. Call reason to assist you.
CLEO. I have none,
And none would have; my love's a noble madness,
Which shows the cause deserved it. Moderate sorrow
Fits vulgar love, and for a vulgar man:
But I have loved with such transcendent passion,
I soared, at first, quite out of reason's view,
And now am lost above it. No, I'm proud
'Tis thus; would Antony could see me now!
Think you he would not sigh? Though he must leave me,
Sure he would sigh; for he is noble-natured,
And bears a tender heart: I know him well.
Ah, no, I know him not; I knew him once,
But now 'tis past.
IRAS. Let it be past with you:
Forget him, madam.
CLEO. Never, never, Iras.
He once was mine; and once, though now 'tis gone,
Leaves a faint image of possession still.
ALEX. Think him unconstant, cruel, and ungrateful.
CLEO. I cannot: if I could, those thoughts were vain.
Faithless, ungrateful, cruel, though he be,
I still must love him.

(*Enter* CHARMION.)

Now, what news, my Charmion?
Will he be kind? and will he not forsake me?
Am I to live, or die? — nay, do I live?
Or am I dead? for when he gave his answer,
Fate took the word, and then I lived or died.
CHAR. I found him, madam ——
CLEO. A long speech preparing?
If thou bring'st comfort, haste, and give it me,
For never was more need.
IRAS. I know he loves you.
CLEO. Had he been kind, her eyes had told me so,
Before her tongue could speak it; now she studies,
To soften what he said; but give me death,
Just as he sent it, Charmion, undisguised,
And in the words he spoke.
CHAR. I found him, then,
Incompassed round, I think, with iron statues;
So mute, so motionless his soldiers stood,
While awfully he cast his eyes about,
And ev'ry leader's hopes or fears surveyed;
Methought he looked resolved, and yet not pleased.
When he beheld me struggling in the crowd,
He blushed, and bade make way.
ALEX. There's comfort yet.
CHAR. Ventidius fixed his eyes upon my passage
Severely, as he meant to frown me back,
And sullenly gave place; I told my message,
Just as you gave it, broken and disordered;
I numbered in it all your sighs and tears,
And while I moved your pitiful request,
That you but only begged a last farewell,
He fetched an inward groan, and ev'ry time
I named you, sighed, as if his heart were breaking,
But, shunned my eyes, and guiltily looked down.
He seemed not now that awful Antony
Who shook an armed assembly with his nod;
But, making show as he would rub his eyes,
Disguised and blotted out a falling tear.
CLEO. Did he then weep? And was I worth a tear?
If what thou hast to say be not as pleasing,
Tell me no more, but let me die contented.
CHAR. He bid me say, he knew himself so well,
He could deny you nothing, if he saw you;
And therefore ——

Cleo. Thou wouldst say, he would not see me?
Char. And therefore begged you not to use a power,
Which he could ill resist; yet he should ever
Respect you as he ought.
Cleo. Is that a word
For Antony to use to Cleopatra?
O that faint word, *respect!* how I disdain it!
Disdain myself, for loving after it!
He should have kept that word for cold Octavia.
Respect is for a wife: am I that thing,
That dull, insipid lump, without desires,
And without pow'r to give 'em?
Alex. You misjudge;
You see through love, and that deludes your sight,
As, what is straight, seems crooked through the water;
But I, who bear my reason undisturbed,
Can see this Antony, this dreaded man,
A fearful slave, who fain would turn away.
And shuns his master's eyes: if you pursue him,
My life on't, he still drags a chain along,
That needs must clog his flight.
Cleo. Could I believe thee! —
Alex. By ev'ry circumstance I know he loves.
True, he's hard pressed, by int'rest and by honor;
Yet he but doubts, and parleys, and casts out
Many a long look for succor.
Cleo. He sends word,
He fears to see my face.
Alex. And would you more?
He shows his weakness who declines the combat,
And you must urge your fortune. Could he speak
More plainly? To my ears, the message sounds —
"Come to my rescue, Cleopatra, come;
Come, free me from Ventidius, from my tyrant:
See me, and give me a pretence to leave him!" —
I hear his trumpets. This way he must pass.
Please you, retire a while; I'll work him first,
That he may bend more easy.
Cleo. You shall rule me;
But all, I fear, in vain.
(*Exit with* Charmion *and* Iras.)
Alex. I fear so too;
Though I concealed my thoughts, to make her bold;
But 'tis our utmost means, and fate befriend it! (*Withdraws.*)

(*Enter Lictors with fasces, one bearing the eagle; then enter* Antony *with* Ventidius, *followed by other Commanders.*)

Ant. Octavius is the minion of blind chance,
But holds from virtue nothing.
Vent. Has he courage?
Ant. But just enough to season him from coward.
Oh, 'tis the coldest youth upon a charge,
The most deliberate fighter! if he ventures
(As in Illyria once they say he did,
To storm a town), 'tis when he cannot choose;
When all the world have fixed their eyes upon him;
And then he lives on that for seven years after;
But, at a close revenge he never fails.
Vent. I heard you challenged him.
Ant. I did, Ventidius.
What think'st thou was his answer? 'Twas so tame!
He said, he had more ways than one to die;
I had not.
Vent. Poor!
Ant. He has more ways than one;
But he would choose 'em all before that one.
Vent. He first would choose an ague, or a fever.
Ant. No; it must be an ague, not a fever;
He has not warmth enough to die by that.
Vent. Or old age and a bed.
Ant. Aye, there's his choice,
He would live, like a lamp, to the last wink,
And crawl upon the utmost verge of life.

O Hercules! Why should a man like this,
Who dares not trust his fate for one great action,
Be all the care of heav'n? Why should he lord it
O'er fourscore thousand men, of whom each one
Is braver than himself?
  VENT. You conquered for him:
Philippi knows it; there you shared with him
That empire, which your sword made all your own.
  ANT. Fool that I was, upon my eagle's wings
I bore this wren, till I was tired with soaring,
And now he mounts above me.
Good heav'ns, is this, — is this the man who braves me?
Who bids my age make way, drives me before him,
To the world's ridge, and sweeps me off like rubbish?
  VENT. Sir, we lose time; the troops are mounted all.
  ANT. Then give the word to march:
I long to leave this prison of a town,
To join thy legions; and, in open field,
Once more to show my face. Lead, my deliverer.

(*Enter* ALEXAS.)

  ALEX. Great emperor,
In mighty arms renowned above mankind,
But, in soft pity to th' oppressed, a god,
This message sends the mournful Cleopatra
To her departing lord.
  VENT. Smooth sycophant!
  ALEX. A thousand wishes, and ten thousand prayers,
Millions of blessings wait you to the wars;
Millions of sighs and tears she sends you too,
And would have sent
As many dear embraces to your arms,
As many parting kisses to your lips;
But those, she fears, have wearied you already
  VENT. (*aside*). False crocodile!
  ALEX. And yet she begs not now, you would not leave her;
That were a wish too mighty for her hopes,
Too presuming
For her low fortune, and your ebbing love;
That were a wish for her more prosp'rous days,
Her blooming beauty, and your growing kindness.
  ANT. (*aside*). Well, I must man it out!
— What would the queen?
  ALEX. First, to these noble warriors, who attend
Your daring courage in the chase of fame,
(Too daring, and too dang'rous for her quiet,)
She humbly recommends all she holds dear,
All her own cares and fears, — the care of you.
  VENT. Yes, witness Actium.
  ANT. Let him speak, Ventidius.
  ALEX. You, when his matchless valor bears him forward,
With ardor too heroic, on his foes,
Fall down, as she would do, before his feet;
Lie in his way, and stop the paths of death.
Tell him, this god is not invulnerable;
That absent Cleopatra bleeds in him;
And, that you may remember her petition,
She begs you wear these trifles, as a pawn,
Which, at your wished return, she will redeem
(*Gives jewels to the Commanders.*)
With all the wealth of Egypt;
This to the great Ventidius she presents,
Whom she can never count her enemy,
Because he loves her lord.
  VENT. Tell her, I'll none on't;
I'm not ashamed of honest poverty;
Not all the diamonds of the East can bribe
Ventidius from his faith. I hope to see
These and the rest of all her sparkling store,
Where they shall more deservingly be placed.
  ANT. And who must wear 'em then?
  VENT. The wronged Octavia.

Ant. You might have spared that word.
Vent. And he that bribe.
Ant. But have I no remembrance?
Alex. Yes, a dear one;
Your slave the queen ——
Ant. My mistress.
Alex. Then your mistress;
Your mistress would, she says, have sent her soul,
But that you had long since; she humbly begs
This ruby bracelet, set with bleeding hearts,
(The emblems of her own), may bind your arm. (*Presenting a bracelet.*)
Vent. Now, my best lord, in honor's name, I ask you,
For manhood's sake, and for your own dear safety,
Touch not these poisoned gifts,
Infected by the sender; touch 'em not;
Myriads of bluest plagues lie underneath 'em,
And more than aconite has dipped the silk.
Ant. Nay, now you grow too cynical, Ventidius:
A lady's favors may be worn with honor.
What, to refuse her bracelet! On my soul,
When I lie pensive in my tent alone,
'Twill pass the wakeful hours of winter nights,
To tell these pretty beads upon my arm,
To count for every one a soft embrace,
A melting kiss at such and such a time,
And now and then the fury of her love,
When —— And what harm's in this?
Alex. None, none, my lord,
But what's to her, that now 'tis past for ever.
Ant. (*going to tie it*). We soldiers are so awkward — help me tie it.
Alex. In faith, my lord, we courtiers too are awkward
In these affairs; so are all men indeed;
Even I, who am not one. But shall I speak?
Ant. Yes, freely.
Alex. Then, my lord, fair hands alone
Are fit to tie it; she, who sent it, can.
Vent. Hell, death! this eunuch pander ruins you.
You will not see her?
(Alexas *whispers an Attendant, who goes out.*)
Ant. But to take my leave.
Vent. Then I have washed an Æthiope. Y'are undone;
Y'are in the toils; y'are taken; y'are destroyed:
Her eyes do Cæsar's work.
Ant. You fear too soon.
I'm constant to myself; I know my strength;
And yet she shall not think me barbarous neither,
Born in the depths of Afric; I'm a Roman,
Bred to the rules of soft humanity.
A guest, and kindly used, should bid farewell.
Vent. You do not know
How weak you are to her, how much an infant;
You are not proof against a smile, or glance;
A sigh will quite disarm you.
Ant. See, she comes!
Now you shall find your error. Gods, I thank you:
I formed the danger greater than it was,
And now 'tis near, 'tis lessened.
Vent. Mark the end yet.

(*Enter* Cleopatra, Charmion, *and* Iras.)

Ant. Well, madam, we are met.
Cleo. Is this a meeting?
Then, we must part?
Ant. We must.
Cleo. Who says we must?
Ant. Our own hard fates.
Cleo. We make those fates ourselves.
Ant. Yes, we have made 'em; we have loved each other
Into our mutual ruin.
Cleo. The gods have seen my joys with envious eyes;
I have no friends in heav'n; and all the world,
(As 'twere the bus'ness of mankind to part us)
Is armed against my love; ev'n you yourself
Join with the rest; you, you are armed against me.
Ant. I will be justified in all I do

To late posterity, and therefore hear me.
If I mix a lie
With any truth, reproach me freely with it;
Else, favor me with silence.
Cleo. You command me,
And I am dumb.
Vent. I like this well; he shows authority.
Ant. That I derive my ruin
From you alone ——
Cleo. O heav'ns! I ruin you!
Ant. You promised me your silence, and you break it
Ere I have scarce begun.
Cleo. Well, I obey you.
Ant. When I beheld you first, it was in Egypt,
Ere Cæsar saw your eyes; you gave me love,
And were too young to know it; that I settled
Your father in his throne, was for your sake;
I left th' acknowledgment for time to ripen.
Cæsar stepped in, and, with a greedy hand,
Plucked the green fruit, ere the first blush of red,
Yet cleaving to the bough. He was my lord,
And was, beside, too great for me to rival;
But, I deserved you first, though he enjoyed you.
When, after, I beheld you in Cilicia,
An enemy to Rome, I pardoned you.
Cleo. I cleared myself ——
Ant. Again you break your promise.
I loved you still, and took your weak excuses,
Took you into my bosom, stained by Cæsar,
And not half mine. I went to Egypt with you,
And hid me from the bus'ness of the world,
Shut out inquiring nations from my sight,
To give whole years to you.
Vent. (*aside*). Yes, to your shame be't spoken.
Ant. How I loved,
Witness, ye days and nights, and all [ye] hours,
That danced away with down upon your feet.
As all your bus'ness were to count my passion!
One day passed by, and nothing saw but love;
Another came, and still 'twas only love;
The suns were wearied out with looking on,
And I untired with loving.
I saw you ev'ry day, and all the day;
And ev'ry day was still but as the first,
So eager was I still to see you more.
Vent. 'Tis all too true.
Ant. Fulvia, my wife, grew jealous,
As she indeed had reason; raised a war
In Italy, to call me back.
Vent. But yet
You went not.
Ant. While within your arms I lay,
The world fell mould'ring from my hands each hour,
And left me scarce a grasp (I thank your love for't).
Vent. Well pushed: that last was home.
Cleo. Yet may I speak?
Ant. If I have urged a falsehood, yes; else, not.
Your silence says I have not. Fulvia died,
(Pardon, you gods, with my unkindness died);
To set the world at peace, I took Octavia,
This Cæsar's sister; in her pride of youth
And flow'r of beauty did I wed that lady,
Whom blushing I must praise, because I left her.
You called; my love obeyed the fatal summons:
This raised the Roman arms; the cause was yours.
I would have fought by land, where I was stronger;
You hindered it; yet, when I fought at sea,
Forsook me fighting; and (O stain to honor!
O lasting shame!) I knew not that I fled;
But fled to follow you.
Vent. What haste she made to hoist her purple sails!
And, to appear magnificent in flight,
Drew half our strength away.
Ant. All this you caused.
And, would you multiply more ruins on me?
This honest man, my best, my only friend,

Has gathered up the shipwrack of my fortunes;
Twelve legions I have left, my last recruits.
And you have watched the news, and bring your eyes
To seize them too. If you have aught to answer,
Now speak, you have free leave.
ALEX. (*aside*). She stands confounded:
Despair is in her eyes.
VENT. Now lay a sigh i' th' way to stop his passage;
Prepare a tear, and bid it for his legions;
'Tis like they shall be sold.
CLEO. How shall I plead my cause, when you, my judge,
Already have condemned me? Shall I bring
The love you bore me for my advocate?
That now is turned against me, that destroys me;
For love, once past, is, at the best, forgotten;
But oft'ner sours to hate; 'twill please my lord
To ruin me, and therefore I'll be guilty.
But, could I once have thought it would have pleased you,
That you would pry, with narrow searching eyes,
Into my faults, severe to my destruction,
And watching all advantages with care,
That serve to make me wretched? Speak, my lord,
For I end here. Though I deserve this usage,
Was it like you to give it?
ANT. Oh, you wrong me,
To think I sought this parting, or desired
To accuse you more than what will clear myself,
And justify this breach.
CLEO. Thus low I thank you.
And, since my innocence will not offend,
I shall not blush to own it.
VENT. After this,
I think she'll blush at nothing.
CLEO. You seemed grieved
(And therein you are kind) that Cæsar first
Enjoyed my love, though you deserved it better;
I grieve for that, my lord, much more than you;
For, had I first been yours, it would have saved
My second choice; I never had been his,
And ne'er had been but yours. But Cæsar first,
You say, possessed my love. Not so, my lord:
He first possessed my person; you, my love:
Cæsar loved me; but I loved Antony.
If I endured him after, 'twas because
I judged it due to the first name of men;
And, half constrained, I gave, as to a tyrant,
What he would take by force.
VENT. O siren! siren!
Yet grant that all the love she boasts were true,
Has she not ruined you? I still urge that,
The fatal consequence.
CLEO. The consequence indeed,
For I dare challenge him, my greatest foe,
To say it was designed; 'tis true, I loved you,
And kept you far from an uneasy wife,
(Such Fulvia was).
Yes, but he'll say, you left Octavia for me; —
And, can you blame me to receive that love,
Which quitted such desert, for worthless me?
How often have I wished some other Cæsar,
Great as the first, and as the second young,
Would court my love, to be refused for you!
VENT. Words, words; but Actium, sir, remember Actium.
CLEO. Ev'n there, I dare his malice. True, I counselled
To fight at sea; but I betrayed you not.
I fled, but not to the enemy. 'Twas fear;
Would I had been a man, not to have feared!
For none would then have envied me your friendship,
Who envy me your love.
ANT. We're both unhappy;
If nothing else, yet our ill fortune parts us.
Speak; would you have me perish by my stay?

CLEO. If as a friend you ask my judgment, go;
If as a lover, stay. If you must perish ——
'Tis a hard word — but stay.
VENT. See now th' effects of her so boasted love!
She strives to drag you down to ruin with her;
But, could she scape without you, oh, how soon
Would she let go her hold, and haste to shore,
And never look behind!
CLEO. Then judge my love by this.
(*Giving* ANTONY *a writing.*)
Could I have borne
A life or death, a happiness or woe,
From yours divided, this had giv'n me means.
ANT. By Hercules, the writing of Octavius!
I know it well: 'tis that proscribing hand,
Young as it was, that led the way to mine,
And left me but the second place in murder. —
See, see, Ventidius! here he offers Egypt,
And joins all Syria to it, as a present,
So, in requital, she forsake my fortunes,
And join her arms with his.
CLEO. And yet you leave me!
You leave me, Antony; and yet I love you,
Indeed I do. I have refused a kingdom;
That's a trifle;
For I could part with life, with anything,
But only you. Oh, let me die but with you!
Is that a hard request?
ANT. Next living with you,
'Tis all that heav'n can give.
ALEX. (*aside*). He melts; we conquer.
CLEO. No, you shall go; your int'rest calls you hence;
Yes; your dear interest pulls too strong, for these
Weak arms to hold you here. —
(*Takes his hand.*)
Go; leave me, soldier
(For you're no more a lover); leave me dying;
Push me all pale and panting from your bosom,
And, when your march begins, let one run after,
Breathless almost for joy, and cry, "She's dead."
The soldiers shout; you then, perhaps, may sigh,
And muster all your Roman gravity.
Ventidius chides; and straight your brow clears up,
As I had never been.
ANT. Gods, 'tis too much;
Too much for man to bear!
CLEO. What is't for me then,
A weak, forsaken woman, and a lover? —
Here let me breathe my last; envy me not
This minute in your arms; I'll die apace,
As fast as e'er I can, and end your trouble.
ANT. Die! rather let me perish; loosened nature
Leap from its hinges! Sink the props of heav'n,
And fall the skies to crush the nether world!
My eyes, my soul, my all! —
(*Embraces her.*)
VENT. And what's this toy,
In balance with your fortune, honor, fame?
ANT. What is't, Ventidius? — it outweighs 'em all;
Why, we have more than conquered Cæsar now:
My queen's not only innocent, but loves me.
This, this is she who drags me down to ruin!
"But, could she scape without me, with what haste
Would she let slip her hold, and make to shore,
And never look behind!"
Down on thy knees, blasphemer as thou art,
And ask forgiveness of wronged innocence.
VENT. I'll rather die, than take it. Will you go?
ANT. Go! whither? Go from all that's excellent?
Faith, honor, virtue, all good things forbid,
That I should go from her, who sets my love

Above the price of kingdoms! Give, you gods,
Give to your boy, your Cæsar,
This rattle of a globe to play withal,
This gewgaw world, and put him cheaply off:
I'll not be pleased with less than Cleopatra.
CLEO. She['s] wholly yours. My heart's so full of joy,
That I shall do some wild extravagance
Of love, in public; and the foolish world,
Which knows not tenderness, will think me mad.
VENT. O women! women! women! all the gods
Have not such pow'r of doing good to man,
As you of doing harm. (*Exit.*)
ANT. Our men are armed.
Unbar the gate that looks to Cæsar's camp;
I would revenge the treachery he meant me;
And long security makes conquest easy.
I'm eager to return before I go;
For, all the pleasures I have known beat thick
On my remembrance. How I long for night!

That both the sweets of mutual love may try,
And once triumph o'er Cæsar [ere] we die. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT III.

(*At one door enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS, *and* ALEXAS, *a train of Egyptians: at the other* ANTONY *and Romans. The entrance on both sides is prepared by music, the trumpets first sounding on* ANTONY'S *part, then answered by timbrels, etc., on* CLEOPATRA'S. CHARMION *and* IRAS *hold a laurel wreath betwixt them. A dance of Egyptians. After the ceremony,* CLEOPATRA *crowns* ANTONY.)

ANT. I thought how those white arms would fold me in,
And strain me close, and melt me into love;
So pleased with that sweet image, I sprung forwards,
And added all my strength to every blow.
CLEO. Come to me, come, my soldier, to my arms!
You've been too long away from my embraces;
But, when I have you fast, and all my own,
With broken murmurs, and with amorous sighs,
I'll say, you were unkind, and punish you,
And mark you red with many an eager kiss.
ANT. My brighter Venus!
CLEO. O my greater Mars!
ANT. Thou join'st us well, my love!
Suppose me come from the Phlegræan plains,
Where gasping giants lay, cleft by my sword,
And mountain-tops pared off each other blow,
To bury those I slew. Receive me, goddess!
Let Cæsar spread his subtile nets, like Vulcan;
In thy embraces I would be beheld
By heav'n and earth at once;
And make their envy what they meant their sport.
Let those who took us blush; I would love on
With awful state, regardless of their frowns,
As their superior god.
There's no satiety of love in thee:
Enjoyed, thou still art new; perpetual spring
Is in thy arms; the ripened fruit but falls,
And blossoms rise to fill its empty place;
And I grow rich by giving.

(*Enter* VENTIDIUS, *and stands apart.*)

ALEX. Oh, now the danger's past, your general comes!
He joins not in your joys, nor minds your triumphs;
But, with contracted brows, looks frowning on,
As envying your success.
ANT. Now, on my soul, he loves me, truly loves me;
He never flattered me in any vice,
But awes me with his virtue; ev'n this minute,

Methinks, he has a right of chiding me.
Lead to the temple; I'll avoid his presence;
It checks too strong upon me.

(*Exeunt the rest. As* Antony *is going,* Ventidius *pulls him by the robe.*)

Vent. Emperor!
Ant. (*looking back*). 'Tis the old argument; I pr'ythee, spare me.
Vent. But this one hearing, emperor.
Ant. Let go
My robe; or, by my father Hercules —
Vent. By Hercules his father, that's yet greater,
I bring you somewhat you would wish to know.
Ant. Thou see'st we are observed; attend me here,
And I'll return. (*Exit.*)
Vent. I'm waning in his favor, yet I love him;
I love this man, who runs to meet his ruin;
And sure the gods, like me, are fond of him:
His virtues lie so mingled with his crimes,
As would confound their choice to punish one,
And not reward the other.

(*Enter* Antony.)

Ant. We can conquer,
You see, without your aid.
We have dislodged their troops;
They look on us at distance, and, like curs
Scaped from the lion's paws, they bay far off,
And lick their wounds, and faintly threaten war.
Five thousand Romans, with their faces upward,
Lie breathless on the plain.
Vent. 'Tis well; and he,
Who lost 'em, could have spared ten thousand more.
Yet it, by this advantage, you could gain
An easier peace, while Cæsar doubts the chance
Of arms! ——
Ant. Oh, think not on't, Ventidius!
The boy pursues my ruin, he'll no peace;
His malice is considerate in advantage.
Oh, he's the coolest murderer! so staunch,
He kills, and keeps his temper.
Vent. Have you no friend
In all his army, who has power to move him?
Mæcenas, or Agrippa, might do much.
Ant. They're both too deep in Cæsar's interests.
We'll work it out by dint of sword, or perish.
Vent. Fain I would find some other.
Ant. Thank thy love.
Some four or five such victories as this
Will save thy farther pains.
Vent. Expect no more; Cæsar is on his guard.
I know, sir, you have conquered against odds;
But still you draw supplies from one poor town,
And of Egyptians; he has all the world,
And, at his back, nations come pouring in,
To fill the gaps you make. Pray, think again.
Ant. Why dost thou drive me from myself, to search
For foreign aids? — to hunt my memory,
And range all o'er a waste and barren place,
To find a friend? The wretched have no friends. ——
Yet I had one, the bravest youth of Rome,
Whom Cæsar loves beyond the love of women;
He could resolve his mind, as fire does wax,
From that hard rugged image melt him down,
And mould him in what softer form he pleased.
Vent. Him would I see, that man of all the world;
Just such a one we want.
Ant. He loved me too,
I was his soul; he lived not but in me;
We were so closed within each other's breasts,
The rivets were not found that joined us first.
That does not reach us yet: we were so mixed,
As meeting streams, both to ourselves were lost;

We were one mass; we could not give or take,
But from the same; for he was I, I he.
Vent. (*aside*). He moves as I would wish him.
Ant. After this,
I need not tell his name — ’twas Dolabella.
Vent. He’s now in Cæsar’s camp.
Ant. No matter where,
Since he’s no longer mine. He took unkindly
That I forbade him Cleopatra’s sight,
Because I feared he loved her; he confessed,
He had a warmth, which, for my sake, he stifled;
For ’twere impossible that two, so one,
Should not have loved the same. When he departed,
He took no leave; and that confirmed my thoughts.
Vent. It argues that he loved you more than her,
Else he had stayed; but he perceived you jealous,
And would not grieve his friend: I know he loves you.
Ant. I should have seen him, then, ere now.
Vent. Perhaps
He has thus long been lab’ring for your peace.
Ant. Would he were here!
Vent. Would you believe he loved you?
I read your answer in your eyes, you would.
Not to conceal it longer, he has sent
A messenger from Cæsar’s camp, with letters.
Ant. Let him appear.
Vent. I’ll bring him instantly.
(*Exit* Ventidius, *and re-enters immediately with* Dolabella.)
Ant. ’Tis he himself! himself, by holy friendship!
(*Runs to embrace him.*)
Art thou returned at last, my better half?
Come, give me all myself!
Let me not live,
If the young bridegroom, longing for his night,
Was ever half so fond.
Dola. I must be silent, for my soul is busy
About a nobler work: she’s new come home,
Like a long-absent man, and wanders o’er
Each room, a stranger to her own, to look
If all be safe.
Ant. Thou hast what’s left of me;
For I am now so sunk from what I was,
Thou find’st me at my lowest water-mark.
The rivers that ran in, and raised my fortunes,
Are all dried up, or take another course.
What I have left is from my native spring;
I’ve still a heart that swells, in scorn of fate,
And lifts me to my banks.
Dola. Still you are lord of all the world to me.
Ant. Why, then I yet am so; for thou art all.
If I had any joy when thou wert absent,
I grudged it to myself; methought I robbed
Thee of thy part. But, O my Dolabella!
Thou hast beheld me other than I am.
Hast thou not seen my morning chambers filled
With sceptered slaves, who waited to salute me?
With eastern monarchs, who forgot the sun,
To worship my uprising? Menial kings
Ran coursing up and down my palace-yard,
Stood silent in my presence, watched my eyes,
And, at my least command, all started out,
Like racers to the goal.
Dola. Slaves to your fortune.
Ant. Fortune is Cæsar’s now; and what am I?
Vent. What you have made yourself; I will not flatter.
Ant. Is this friendly done?
Dola. Yes, when his end is so, I must join with him;
Indeed I must, and yet you must not chide.
Why am I else your friend?
Ant. Take heed, young man,
How thou upbraid’st my love; the queen has eyes,

And thou too hast a soul. Canst thou remember,
When, swelled with hatred, thou beheld’st her first,
As accessary to thy brother’s death?
Dola. Spare my remembrance; ’twas a guilty day,
And still the blush hangs here.
Ant. To clear herself
For sending him no aid, she came from Egypt.
Her galley down the silver Cydnos rowed,
The tackling silk, the streamers waved with gold;
The gentle winds were lodged in purple sails;
Her nymphs, like Nereids, round her couch were placed,
Where she, another sea-born Venus, lay.
Dola. No more; I would not hear it.
Ant. Oh, you must!
She lay, and leaned her cheek upon her hand,
And cast a look so languishingly sweet,
As if, secure of all beholders’ hearts,
Neglecting, she could take ’em; boys, like Cupids,
Stood fanning with their painted wings the winds
That played about her face; but if she smiled,
A darting glory seemed to blaze abroad,
That men’s desiring eyes were never wearied,
But hung upon the object. To soft flutes
The silver oars kept time; and while they played,
The hearing gave new pleasure to the sight,
And both to thought. ’Twas heaven, or somewhat more;
For she so charmed all hearts, that gazing crowds
Stood panting on the shore, and wanted breath
To give their welcome voice.
Then, Dolabella, where was then thy soul?
Was not thy fury quite disarmed with wonder?
Didst thou not shrink behind me from those eyes,
And whisper in my ear, “Oh, tell her not
That I accused her with my brother’s death?”
Dola. And should my weakness be a plea for yours?
Mine was an age when love might be excused,
When kindly warmth, and when my springing youth
Made it a debt to nature. Yours ——
Vent. Speak boldly.
Yours, he would say, in your declining age,
When no more heat was left but what you forced,
When all the sap was needful for the trunk;
When it went down, then you constrained the course,
And robbed from nature, to supply desire;
In you (I would not use so harsh a word)
But ’tis plain dotage.
Ant. Ha!
Dola. ’Twas urged too home.
But yet the loss was private that I made;
’Twas but myself I lost: I lost no legions;
I had no world to lose, no people’s love.
Ant. This from a friend?
Dola. Yes, Antony, a true one;
A friend so tender, that each word I speak
Stabs my own heart, before it reach your ear.
Oh, judge me not less kind, because I chide!
To Cæsar I excuse you.
Ant. O ye gods!
Have I then lived to be excused to Cæsar?
Dola. As to your equal.
Ant. Well, he’s but my equal;
While I wear this, he never shall be more.
Dola. I bring conditions from him.
Ant. Are they noble?
Methinks thou shouldst not bring ’em else; yet he
Is full of deep dissembling, knows no honor
Divided from his int’rest. Fate mistook him;
For nature meant him for an usurer:
He’s fit indeed to buy, not conquer kingdoms.
Vent. Then, granting this,
What pow’r was theirs who wrought so hard a temper
To honorable terms?
Ant. It was my Dolabella, or some god.

Dola. Nor I, nor yet Mæcenas, nor Agrippa:
They were your enemies; and I, a friend,
Too weak alone; yet ’twas a Roman’s deed.
Ant. ’Twas like a Roman done. Show me that man,
Who has preserved my life, my love, my honor;
Let me but see his face.
Vent. That task is mine,
And, Heav’n, thou know’st how pleasing.
(*Exit* Ventidius.)
Dola. You’ll remember
To whom you stand obliged?
Ant. When I forget it,
Be thou unkind, and that’s my greatest curse.
My queen shall thank him too.
Dola. I fear she will not.
Ant. But she shall do’t. The queen, my Dolabella!
Hast thou not still some grudgings of thy fever?
Dola. I would not see her lost.
Ant. When I forsake her,
Leave me, my better stars! for she has truth
Beyond her beauty. Cæsar tempted her,
At no less price than kingdoms, to betray me;
But she resisted all; and yet thou chid’st me
For loving her too well. Could I do so?
Dola. Yes; there’s my reason.

(*Re-enter* Ventidius, *with* Octavia, *leading* Antony’s *two little daughters.*)

Ant. (*starting back*). Where? — Octavia there!
Vent. What, is she poison to you? — a disease?
Look on her, view her well, and those she brings:
Are they all strangers to your eyes? has nature
No secret call, no whisper they are yours?
Dola. For shame, my lord, if not for love, receive ’em
With kinder eyes. If you confess a man,
Meet ’em, embrace ’em, bid ’em welcome to you.
Your arms should open, ev’n without your knowledge,
To clasp ’em in; your feet should turn to wings,
To bear you to ’em; and your eyes dart out
And aim a kiss, ere you could reach the lips.
Ant. I stood amazed, to think how they came hither.
Vent. I sent for ’em; I brought ’em in unknown
To Cleopatra’s guards.
Dola. Yet are you cold?
Octav. Thus long I have attended for my welcome,
Which, as a stranger, sure I might expect.
Who am I?
Ant. Cæsar’s sister.
Octav. That’s unkind.
Had I been nothing more than Cæsar’s sister,
Know, I had still remained in Cæsar’s camp;
But your Octavia, your much injured wife,
Though banished from your bed, driv’n from your house,
In spite of Cæsar’s sister, still is yours.
’Tis true, I have a heart disdains your coldness,
And prompts me not to seek what you should offer;
But a wife’s virtue still surmounts that pride.
I come to claim you as my own; to show
My duty first; to ask, nay beg, your kindness.
Your hand, my lord; ’tis mine, and I will have it. (*Taking his hand.*)
Vent. Do, take it; thou deserv’st it.
Dola. On my soul,
And so she does; she’s neither too submissive,
Nor yet too haughty; but so just a mean
Shows, as it ought, a wife and Roman too.
Ant. I fear, Octavia, you have begged my life.
Octav. Begged it, my lord?
Ant. Yes, begged it, my ambassadress,

Poorly and basely begged it of your brother.
Octav. Poorly and basely I could never beg;
Nor could my brother grant.
Ant. Shall I, who, to my kneeling slave, could say,
"Rise up, and be a king," shall I fall down
And cry, "Forgive me, Cæsar"? Shall I set
A man, my equal, in the place of Jove,
As he could give me being? No; that word,
"Forgive," would choke me up,
And die upon my tongue.
Dola. You shall not need it.
Ant. I will not need it. Come, you've all betrayed me, —
My friend too! — to receive some vile conditions,
My wife has bought me, with her prayers and tears;
And now I must become her branded slave.
In every peevish mood, she will upbraid
The life she gave; if I but look awry,
She cries, "I'll tell my brother."
Octav. My hard fortune
Subjects me still to your unkind mistakes;
But the conditions I have brought are such
You need not blush to take. I love your honor,
Because 'tis mine; it never shall be said,
Octavia's husband was her brother's slave.
Sir, you are free, free, ev'n from her you loathe;
For, though my brother bargains for your love,
Makes me the price and cement of your peace,
I have a soul like yours; I cannot take
Your love as alms, nor beg what I deserve.
I'll tell my brother we are reconciled;
He shall draw back his troops, and you shall march
To rule the East; I may be dropped at Athens,
No matter where. I never will complain,
But only keep the barren name of wife,
And rid you of the trouble.
Vent. Was ever such a strife of sullen honor!
Both scorn to be obliged.
Dola. Oh, she has touched him in the tender'st part;
See how he reddens with despite and shame,
To be outdone in generosity!
Vent. See how he winks! how he dries up a tear,
That fain would fall!
Ant. Octavia, I have heard you, and must praise
The greatness of your soul;
But cannot yield to what you have proposed;
For I can ne'er be conquered but by love;
And you do all for duty. You would free me,
And would be dropped at Athens; was't not so?
Octav. It was, my lord.
Ant. Then I must be obliged
To one who loves me not, who, to herself,
May call me thankless and ungrateful man. —
I'll not endure it; no.
Vent. (*aside*). I am glad it pinches there.
Octav. Would you triumph o'er poor Octavia's virtue?
That pride was all I had to bear me up;
That you might think you owed me for your life,
And owed it to my duty, not my love.
I have been injured, and my haughty soul
Could brook but ill the man who slights my bed.
Ant. Therefore you love me not.
Octav. Therefore, my lord,
I should not love you.
Ant. Therefore you would leave me?
Octav. And therefore I should leave you — if I could.
Dola. Her soul's too great, after such injuries,
To say she loves; and yet she lets you see it.
Her modesty and silence plead her cause.
Ant. O Dolabella, which way shall I turn?
I find a secret yielding in my soul;
But Cleopatra, who would die with me,
Must she be left? Pity pleads for Octavia;
But does it not plead more for Cleopatra?

Vent. Justice and pity both plead for Octavia;
For Cleopatra, neither.
One would be ruined with you, but she first
Had ruined you: the other, you have ruined,
And yet she would preserve you.
In everything their merits are unequal.
Ant. O my distracted soul!
Octav. Sweet heaven compose it! —
Come, come, my lord, if I can pardon you,
Methinks you should accept it. Look on these;
Are they not yours? Or stand they thus neglected,
As they are mine? Go to him, children, go;
Kneel to him, take him by the hand, speak to him;
For you may speak, and he may own you too,
Without a blush; and so he cannot all
His children. Go, I say, and pull him to me,
And pull him to yourselves, from that bad woman.
You, Agrippina, hang upon his arms;
And you, Antonia, clasp about his waist.
If he will shake you off, if he will dash you
Against the pavement, you must bear it, children;
For you are mine, and I was born to suffer.
(*Here the Children go to him, etc.*)
Vent. Was ever sight so moving? — Emperor!
Dola. Friend!
Octav. Husband!
Both Child. Father!
Ant. I am vanquished; take me,
Octavia; take me, children; share me all.
(*Embracing them.*)
I've been a thriftless debtor to your loves,
And run out much, in riot, from your stock;
But all shall be amended.
Octav. O blest hour!
Dola. O happy change!
Vent. My joy stops at my tongue;
But it has found two channels here for one,
And bubbles out above.
Ant. (*to* Octav.). This is thy triumph; lead me where thou wilt;
Ev'n to thy brother's camp.
Octav. All there are yours.

(*Enter* Alexas *hastily.*)

Alex. The queen, my mistress, sir, and yours ——
Ant. 'Tis past. —
Octavia, you shall stay this night; to-morrow,
Cæsar and we are one.
(*Exit leading* Octavia; Dolabella *and the Children follow.*)
Vent. There's news for you; run, my officious eunuch,
Be sure to be the first; haste forward;
Haste, my dear eunuch, haste! (*Exit.*)
Alex. This downright fighting fool, this thick-skulled hero,
This blunt, unthinking instrument of death,
With plain dull virtue has outgone my wit.
Pleasure forsook my earliest infancy;
The luxury of others robbed my cradle,
And ravished thence the promise of a man.
Cast out from nature, disinherited
Of what her meanest children claim by kind,
Yet greatness kept me from contempt; that's gone.
Had Cleopatra followed my advice,
Then he had been betrayed who now forsakes.
She dies for love; but she has known its joys.
Gods, is this just, that I, who know no joys,
Must die, because she loves?

(*Enter* Cleopatra, Charmion, Iras, *train.*)

O madam, I have seen what blasts my eyes!
Octavia's here!
Cleo. Peace with that raven's note.
I know it too; and now am in
The pangs of death.
Alex. You are no more a queen;
Egypt is lost.
Cleo. What tell'st thou me of Egypt?

My life, my soul is lost! Octavia has him! —
O fatal name to Cleopatra's love!
My kisses, my embraces now are hers;
While I —— But thou hast seen my rival; speak,
Does she deserve this blessing? Is she fair?
Bright as a goddess? And is all perfection
Confined to her? It is. Poor I was made
Of that coarse matter, which, when she was finished,
The gods threw by, for rubbish.
Alex. She's indeed a very miracle.
Cleo. Death to my hopes, a miracle!
Alex. (*bowing*). A miracle;
I mean of goodness; for in beauty, madam,
You make all wonders cease.
Cleo. I was too rash:
Take this in part of recompense. But, oh!
(*Giving a ring.*)
I fear thou flatter'st me.
Char. She comes! she's here!
Iras. Fly, madam, Cæsar's sister!
Cleo. Were she the sister of the thund'rer Jove,
And bore her brother's lightning in her eyes,
Thus would I face my rival.
(*Meets* Octavia *with* Ventidius. Octavia *bears up to her. Their trains come up on either side.*)
Octav. I need not ask if you are Cleopatra;
Your haughty carriage ——
Cleo. Shows I am a queen;
Nor need I ask you, who you are.
Octav. A Roman;
A name, that makes and can unmake a queen.
Cleo. Your lord, the man who serves me, is a Roman.
Octav. He was a Roman, till he lost that name,
To be a slave in Egypt; but I come
To free him thence.
Cleo. Peace, peace, my lover's Juno.
When he grew weary of that household clog,
He chose my easier bonds.
Octav. I wonder not
Your bonds are easy; you have long been practised
In that lascivious art. He's not the first
For whom you spread your snares: let Cæsar witness.
Cleo. I loved not Cæsar; 'twas but gratitude
I paid his love. The worst your malice can,
Is but to say the greatest of mankind
Has been my slave. The next, but far above him
In my esteem, is he whom law calls yours,
But whom his love made mine.
Octav. (*coming up close to her*). I would view nearer
That face, which has so long usurped my right,
To find th' inevitable charms that catch
Mankind so sure, that ruined my dear lord.
Cleo. Oh, you do well to search; for had you known
But half these charms, you had not lost his heart.
Octav. Far be their knowledge from a Roman lady,
Far from a modest wife! Shame of our sex,
Dost thou not blush to own those black endearments
That make sin pleasing?
Cleo. You may blush, who want 'em.
If bounteous nature, if indulgent heav'n
Have giv'n me charms to please the bravest man,
Should I not thank 'em? Should I be ashamed,
And not be proud? I am, that he has loved me;
And, when I love not him, heav'n change this face
For one like that.
Octav. Thou lov'st him not so well.
Cleo. I love him better, and deserve him more.
Octav. You do not, cannot; you have been his ruin.
Who made him cheap at Rome, but Cleopatra?
Who made him scorned abroad, but Cleopatra?

At Actium, who betrayed him? Cleopatra.
Who made his children orphans, and poor me
A wretched widow? only Cleopatra.
Cleo. Yet she who loves him best is Cleopatra.
If you have suffered, I have suffered more.
You bear the specious title of a wife,
To gild your cause, and draw the pitying world
To favor it; the world contemns poor me,
For I have lost my honor, lost my fame,
And stained the glory of my royal house,
And all to bear the branded name of mistress.
There wants but life, and that too I would lose
For him I love.
Octav. Be't so, then; take thy wish.
(*Exit cum suis.*)
Cleo. And 'tis my wish,
Now he is lost for whom alone I lived.
My sight grows dim, and every object dances,
And swims before me, in the maze of death.
My spirits, while they were opposed, kept up;
They could not sink beneath a rival's scorn.
But now she's gone, they faint.
Alex. Mine have had leisure
To recollect their strength, and furnish counsel,
To ruin her who else must ruin you.
Cleo. Vain promiser!
Lead me, my Charmion; nay, your hand too, Iras.
My grief has weight enough to sink you both.
Conduct me to some solitary chamber,
And draw the curtains round;
Then leave me to myself, to take alone
My fill of grief.

There I till death will his unkindness weep;
As harmless infants moan themselves asleep.
(*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

([*Enter*] Antony [*and*] Dolabella.)

Dola. Why would you shift it from yourself on me?
Can you not tell her you must part?
Ant. I cannot.
I could pull out an eye, and bid it go,
And t'other should not weep. O Dolabella,
How many deaths are in this word "depart!"
I dare not trust my tongue to tell her so:
One look of hers would thaw me into tears,
And I should melt till I were lost again.
Dola. Then let Ventidius; he's rough by nature.
Ant. Oh, he'll speak too harshly;
He'll kill her with the news. Thou, only thou.
Dola. Nature has cast me in so soft a mould,
That but to hear a story feigned for pleasure
Of some sad lover's death, moistens my eyes,
And robs me of my manhood. I should speak
So faintly, with such fear to grieve her heart,
She'd not believe it earnest.
Ant. Therefore, — therefore
Thou only, thou art fit. Think thyself me;
And when thou speak'st (but let it first be long),
Take off the edge from every sharper sound,
And let our parting be as gently made
As other loves begin. Wilt thou do this?
Dola. What you have said so sinks into my soul,
That, if I must speak, I shall speak just so.
Ant. I leave you then to your sad task. Farewell.
I sent her word to meet you.
(*Goes to the door, and comes back.*)
I forgot;
Let her be told, I'll make her peace with mine:
Her crown and dignity shall be preserved,
If I have pow'r with Cæsar. —— Oh, be sure
To think on that.

DOLA. Fear not, I will remember.
(ANTONY *goes again to the door, and comes back.*)
ANT. And tell her, too, how much I was constrained;
I did not this, but with extremest force.
Desire her not to hate my memory,
For I still cherish hers,—— insist on that.
DOLA. Trust me, I'll not forget it.
ANT. Then that's all.
(*Goes out, and returns again.*)
Wilt thou forgive my fondness this once more?
Tell her, though we shall never meet again,
If I should hear she took another love,
The news would break my heart. — Now I must go;
For every time I have returned, I feel
My soul more tender; and my next command
Would be to bid her stay, and ruin both.
(*Exit.*)
DOLA. Men are but children of a larger growth;
Our appetites as apt to change as theirs,
And full as craving too, and full as vain;
And yet the soul, shut up in her dark room,
Viewing so clear abroad, at home sees nothing;
But, like a mole in earth, busy and blind,
Works all her folly up, and casts it outward
To the world's open view. Thus I discovered,
And blamed the love of ruined Antony;
Yet wish that I were he, to be so ruined.

(*Enter* VENTIDIUS *above.*)

VENT. Alone? and talking to himself? concerned too?
Perhaps my guess is right; he loved her once,
And may pursue it still.
DOLA. O friendship! friendship!
Ill canst thou answer this; and reason, worse.
Unfaithful in th' attempt; hopeless to win;
And if I win, undone — mere madness all.
And yet the occasion's fair. What injury
To him, to wear the robe which he throws by?
VENT. None, none at all. This happens as I wish,
To ruin her yet more with Antony.

(*Enter* CLEOPATRA, *talking with* ALEXAS; CHARMION, IRAS, *on the other side.*)

DOLA. She comes! What charms have sorrow on that face!
Sorrow seems pleased to dwell with so much sweetness;
Yet, now and then, a melancholy smile
Breaks loose, like lightning in a winter's night,
And shows a moment's day.
VENT. If she should love him too! her eunuch there!
That porcpisce bodes ill weather. Draw, draw nearer,
Sweet devil, that I may hear.
ALEX. Believe me; try
(DOLABELLA *goes over to* CHARMION *and* IRAS; *seems to talk with them.*)
To make him jealous. Jealousy is like
A polished glass held to the lips when life's in doubt;
If there be breath, 'twill catch the damp, and show it.
CLEO. I grant you, jealousy's a proof of love,
But 'tis a weak and unavailing med'cine;
It puts out the disease, and makes it show,
But has no pow'r to cure.
ALEX. 'Tis your last remedy, and strongest too.
And then this Dolabella, who so fit
To practise on? He's handsome, valiant, young,
And looks as he were laid for nature's bait,
To catch weak women's eyes.
He stands already more than half suspected
Of loving you; the least kind word or glance
You give this youth will kindle him with love.
Then, like a burning vessel set adrift,
You'll send him down amain before the wind,
To fire the heart of jealous Antony.
CLEO. Can I do this? Ah, no; my love's so true,
That I can neither hide it where it is,

Nor show it where it is not. Nature meant me
A wife, a silly, harmless, household dove,
Fond without art, and kind without deceit;
But Fortune, that has made a mistress of me,
Has thrust me out to the wide world, unfurnished
Of falsehood to be happy.
Alex. Force yourself.
Th' event will be, your lover will return
Doubly desirous to possess the good
Which once he feared to lose.
Cleo. I must attempt it;
But oh, with what regret!
(*Exit* Alexas. *She comes up to* Dolabella.)
Vent. So, now the scene draws near; they're in my reach.
Cleo. (*to* Dola.). Discoursing with my women! might not I
Share in your entertainment?
Char. You have been
The subject of it, madam.
Cleo. How! and how?
Iras. Such praises of your beauty!
Cleo. Mere poetry.
Your Roman wits, your Gallus and Tibullus,
Have taught you this from Cytheris and Delia.
Dola. Those Roman wits have never been in Egypt;
Cytheris and Delia else had been unsung.
I, who have seen —— had I been born a poet,
Should choose a nobler name.
Cleo. You flatter me.
But, 'tis your nations' vice: all of your country
Are flatterers, and all false. Your friend's like you.
I'm sure he sent you not to speak these words.
Dola. No, madam; yet he sent me ——
Cleo. Well, he sent you ——
Dola. Of a less pleasing errand.
Cleo. How less pleasing?
Less to yourself, or me?
Dola. Madam, to both;
For you must mourn, and I must grieve to cause it.
Cleo. You, Charmion, and your fellow stand at distance. —
(*Aside.*) — Hold up, my spirits. —— Well, now your mournful matter;
For I'm prepared, perhaps can guess it too.
Dola. I wish you would; for 'tis a thankless office,
To tell ill news; and I, of all your sex,
Most fear displeasing you.
Cleo. Of all your sex,
I soonest could forgive you, if you should.
Vent. Most delicate advances! Woman! Woman!
Dear, damned, inconstant sex!
Cleo. In the first place,
I am to be forsaken; is't not so?
Dola. I wish I could not answer to that question.
Cleo. Then pass it o'er, because it troubles you;
I should have been more grieved another time.
Next, I'm to lose my kingdom. —— Farewell, Egypt!
Yet, is there any more?
Dola. Madam, I fear
Your too deep sense of grief has turned your reason.
Cleo. No, no, I'm not run mad; I can bear fortune;
And love may be expelled by other love,
As poisons are by poisons.
Dola. You o'erjoy me, madam,
To find your griefs so moderately borne.
You've heard the worst; all are not false like him.
Cleo. No; heav'n forbid they should.
Dola. Some men are constant.
Cleo. And constancy deserves reward, that's certain.
Dola. Deserves it not; but give it leave to hope.
Vent. I'll swear, thou hast my leave. I have enough.
But how to manage this! Well, I'll consider. (*Exit.*)
Dola. I came prepared
To tell you heavy news; news, which I thought
Would fright the blood from your pale cheeks to hear;

But you have met it with a cheerfulness
That makes my task more easy; and my tongue,
Which on another's message was employed,
Would gladly speak its own.
Cleo. Hold, Dolabella.
First tell me, were you chosen by my lord?
Or sought you this employment?
Dola. He picked me out; and, as his bosom friend,
He charged me with his words.
Cleo. The message then
I know was tender, and each accent smooth,
To mollify that rugged word "depart."
Dola. Oh, you mistake; he chose the harshest words;
With fiery eyes, and with contracted brows,
He coined his face in the severest stamp;
And fury shook his fabric, like an earthquake;
He heaved for vent, and burst like bellowing Ætna,
In sounds scarce human — "Hence, away for ever;
Let her begone, the blot of my renown,
And bane of all my hopes!
(*All the time of this speech,* Cleopatra *seems more and more concerned, till she sinks quite down.*)
Let her be driv'n as far as men can think
From man's commerce! She'll poison to the centre."
Cleo. Oh, I can bear no more!
Dola. Help, help! — O wretch! O cursed, cursed wretch!
What have I done!
Char. Help, chafe her temples, Iras.
Iras. Bend, bend her forward quickly.
Char. Heav'n be praised,
She comes again.
Cleo. Oh, let him not approach me.
Why have you brought me back to this loathed being,
Th' abode of falsehood, violated vows,
And injured love? For pity, let me go;
For, if there be a place of long repose,
I'm sure I want it. My disdainful lord
Can never break that quiet; nor awake
The sleeping soul with hollowing in my tomb
Such words as fright her hence. — Unkind, unkind!
Dola. (*kneeling*). Believe me, 'tis against myself I speak;
That sure deserves belief. I injured him:
My friend ne'er spoke those words. Oh, had you seen
How often he came back, and every time
With something more obliging and more kind,
To add to what he said; what dear farewells;
How almost vanquished by his love he parted,
And leaned to what unwillingly he left!
I, traitor as I was, for love of you
(But what can you not do, who made me false!)
I forged that lie; for whose forgiveness kneels
This self-accused, self-punished criminal.
Cleo. With how much ease believe we what we wish!
Rise, Dolabella; if you have been guilty,
I have contributed, and too much love
Has made me guilty too.
Th' advance of kindness which I made was feigned,
To call back fleeting love by jealousy;
But 'twould not last. Oh, rather let me lose,
Than so ignobly trifle with his heart.
Dola. I find your breast fenced round from human reach,
Transparent as a rock of solid crystal,
Seen through, but never pierced. My friend, my friend!
What endless treasure hast thou thrown away,
And scattered, like an infant, in the ocean,
Vain sums of wealth, which none can gather thence!
Cleo. Could you not beg
An hour's admittance to his private ear?
Like one who wanders through long barren wilds
And yet foreknows no hospitable inn
Is near to succor hunger, eats his fill,
Before his painful march:
So would I feed a while my famished eyes
Before we part; for I have far to go,
If death be far, and never must return.

(VENTIDIUS *with* OCTAVIA, *behind*.)

VENT. From hence you may discover — oh, sweet, sweet!
Would you indeed? the pretty hand in earnest?
DOLA. I will, for this reward. — (*Takes her hand.*) Draw it not back,
'Tis all I e'er will beg.
VENT. They turn upon us.
OCTAV. What quick eyes has guilt!
VENT. Seem not to have observed 'em, and go on.

(*They enter.*)

DOLA. Saw you the emperor, Ventidius?
VENT. No.
I sought him; but I heard that he was private,
None with him but Hipparchus, his freedman.
DOLA. Know you his bus'ness?
VENT. Giving him instructions,
And letters to his brother Cæsar.
DOLA. Well,
He must be found.
(*Exeunt* DOLABELLA *and* CLEOPATRA.)
OCTAV. Most glorious impudence!
VENT. She looked, methought,
As she would say, "Take your old man, Octavia;
Thank you, I'm better here."
Well, but what use
Make we of this discovery?
OCTAV. Let it die.
VENT. I pity Dolabella; but she's dangerous:
Her eyes have pow'r beyond Thessalian charms
To draw the moon from heav'n; for eloquence,
The sea-green Sirens taught her voice their flatt'ry;
And, while she speaks, night steals upon the day,
Unmarked of those that hear. Then she's so charming,
Age buds at sight of her, and swells to youth:
The holy priests gaze on her when she smiles;
And with heaved hands, forgetting gravity,
They bless her wanton eyes: even I, who hate her,
With a malignant joy behold such beauty;
And, while I curse, desire it. Antony
Must needs have some remains of passion still,
Which may ferment into a worse relapse,
If now not fully cured. I know, this minute,
With Cæsar he's endeavoring her peace.
OCTAV. You have prevailed; but for a farther purpose. (*Walks off.*)
I'll prove how he will relish this discovery.
What, make a strumpet's peace! it swells my heart:
It must not, sha' not be.
VENT. His guards appear.
Let me begin, and you shall second me.

(*Enter* ANTONY.)

ANT. Octavia, I was looking you, my love:
What, are your letters ready? I have giv'n
My last instructions.
OCTAV. Mine, my lord, are written.
ANT. Ventidius! (*Drawing him aside.*)
VENT. My lord?
ANT. A word in private.
When saw you Dolabella?
VENT. Now, my lord,
He parted hence; and Cleopatra with him.
ANT. Speak softly. — 'Twas by my command he went,
To bear my last farewell.
VENT. (*aloud*). It looked indeed
Like your farewell.
ANT. More softly. — My farewell?
What secret meaning have you in those words
Of "my farewell"? He did it by my order.
VENT. (*aloud*). Then he obeyed your order. I suppose
You bid him do it with all gentleness,
All kindness, and all —— love.
ANT. How she mourned,
The poor forsaken creature!
VENT. She took it as she ought; she bore your parting
As she did Cæsar's, as she would another's,
Were a new love to come.
ANT. (*aloud*). Thou dost belie her;

Most basely, and maliciously belie her.
Vent. I thought not to displease you; I have done.
Octav. (*coming up*). You seemed disturbed, my lord.
Ant. A very trifle.
Retire, my love.
Vent. It was indeed a trifle.
He sent ——
Ant. (*angrily*). No more. Look how thou disobey'st me;
Thy life shall answer it.
Octav. Then 'tis no trifle.
Vent. (to Octav.). 'Tis less, a very nothing: you too saw it,
As well as I, and therefore 'tis no secret.
Ant. She saw it!
Vent. Yes; she saw young Dolabella ——
Ant. Young Dolabella!
Vent. Young, I think him young,
And handsome too; and so do others think him.
But what of that? He went by your command,
Indeed 'tis probable, with some kind message;
For she received it graciously; she smiled;
And then he grew familiar with her hand,
Squeezed it, and worried it with ravenous kisses;
She blushed, and sighed, and smiled, and blushed again;
At last she took occasion to talk softly,
And brought her cheek up close, and leaned on his;
At which, he whispered kisses back on hers;
And then she cried aloud that constancy
Should be rewarded.
Octav. This I saw and heard.
Ant. What woman was it, whom you heard and saw
So playful with my friend? Not Cleopatra?
Vent. Ev'n she, my lord.
Ant. My Cleopatra?
Vent. Your Cleopatra;
Dolabella's Cleopatra; every man's Cleopatra.
Ant. Thou li'st.
Vent. I do not lie, my lord.
Is this so strange? Should mistresses be left,
And not provide against a time of change?
You know she's not much used to lonely nights.
Ant. I'll think no more on't.
I know 'tis false, and see the plot betwixt you.
You needed not have gone this way, Octavia.
What harms it you that Cleopatra's just?
She's mine no more. I see, and I forgive:
Urge it no farther, love.
Octav. Are you concerned,
That she's found false?
Ant. I should be, were it so;
For, though 'tis past, I would not that the world
Should tax my former choice, that I loved one
Of so light note; but I forgive you both.
Vent. What has my age deserved, that you should think
I would abuse your ears with perjury?
If heav'n be true, she's false.
Ant. Though heav'n and earth
Should witness it, I'll not believe her tainted.
Vent. I'll bring you, then, a witness
From hell, to prove her so. (*Seeing* Alexas *just ent'ring, and starting back.*) — Nay, go not back;
For stay you must and shall.
Alex. What means my lord?
Vent. To make you do what most you hate, — speak truth.
You are of Cleopatra's private counsel,
Of her bed-counsel, her lascivious hours;
Are conscious of each nightly change she makes,
And watch her, as Chaldeans do the moon,
Can tell what signs she passes through, what day.
Alex. My noble lord!
Vent. My most illustrious pander,
No fine set speech, no cadence, no turned periods,
But a plain homespun truth, is what I ask.
I did, myself, o'erhear your queen make love
To Dolabella. Speak; for I will know,

By your confession, what more passed betwixt ’em;
How near the bus’ness draws to your employment;
And when the happy hour.
Ant. Speak truth, Alexas; whether it offend
Or please Ventidius, care not. Justify
Thy injured queen from malice; dare his worst.
Octav. (*aside*). See how he gives him courage! how he fears
To find her false! and shuts his eyes to truth,
Willing to be misled!
Alex. As far as love may plead for woman’s frailty,
Urged by desert and greatness of the lover,
So far, divine Octavia, may my queen
Stand ev’n excused to you for loving him
Who is your lord: so far, from brave Ventidius,
May her past actions hope a fair report.
Ant. ’Tis well, and truly spoken: mark, Ventidius.
Alex. To you, most noble emperor, her strong passion
Stands not excused, but wholly justified.
Her beauty’s charms alone, without her crown,
From Ind and Meroe drew the distant vows
Of sighing kings; and at her feet were laid
The sceptres of the earth, exposed on heaps,
To choose where she would reign:
She thought a Roman only could deserve her,
And, of all Romans, only Antony;
And, to be less than wife to you, disdained
Their lawful passion.
Ant. ’Tis but truth.
Alex. And yet, though love, and your unmatched desert,
Have drawn her from the due regard of honor,
At last heav’n opened her unwilling eyes
To see the wrongs she offered fair Octavia,
Whose holy bed she lawlessly usurped.
The sad effects of this improsperous war
Confirmed those pious thoughts.
Vent. (*aside*). Oh, wheel you there?
Observe him now; the man begins to mend,
And talk substantial reason. Fear not, eunuch;
The emperor has giv’n thee leave to speak.
Alex. Else had I never dared t’offend his ears
With what the last necessity has urged
On my forsaken mistress; yet I must not
Presume to say, her heart is wholly altered.
Ant. No, dare not for thy life, I charge thee dare not
Pronounce that fatal word!
Octav. (*aside*). Must I bear this? Good heav’n, afford me patience.
Vent. On, sweet eunuch; my dear half-man, proceed.
Alex. Yet Dolabella
Has loved her long; he, next my god-like lord,
Deserves her best; and should she meet his passion,
Rejected, as she is, by him she loved ——
Ant. Hence from my sight! for I can bear no more:
Let furies drag thee quick to hell; let all
The longer damned have rest; each torturing hand
Do thou employ, till Cleopatra comes;
Then join thou too, and help to torture her!
(*Exit* Alexas, *thrust out by* Antony.)
Octav. ’Tis not well,
Indeed, my lord, ’tis much unkind to me,
To show this passion, this extreme concernment,
For an abandoned, faithless prostitute.
Ant. Octavia, leave me; I am much disordered.
Leave me, I say.
Octav. My lord!
Ant. I bid you leave me.
Vent. Obey him, madam; best withdraw a while,
And see how this will work.
Octav. Wherein have I offended you, my lord,
That I am bid to leave you? Am I false,
Or infamous? Am I a Cleopatra?
Were I she,

Base as she is, you would not bid me leave you;
But hang upon my neck, take slight excuses,
And fawn upon my falsehood.
ANT. 'Tis too much,
Too much, Octavia; I am pressed with sorrows
Too heavy to be borne; and you add more:
I would retire, and recollect what's left
Of man within, to aid me.
OCTAV. You would mourn,
In private, for your love, who has betrayed you.
You did but half return to me; your kindness
Lingered behind with her. I hear, my lord,
You make conditions for her,
And would include her treaty. Wond'rous proofs
Of love to me!
ANT. Are you my friend, Ventidius?
Or are you turned a Dolabella too,
And let this Fury loose?
VENT. Oh, be advised,
Sweet madam, and retire.
OCTAV. Yes, I will go; but never to return.
You shall no more be haunted with this Fury.
My lord, my lord, love will not always last,
When urged with long unkindness and disdain.
Take her again whom you prefer to me;
She stays but to be called. Poor cozened man!
Let a feigned parting give her back your heart,
Which a feigned love first got; for injured me,
Though my just sense of wrongs forbid my stay,
My duty shall be yours.
To the dear pledges of our former love
My tenderness and care shall be transferred,
And they shall cheer, by turns, my widowed nights.
So, take my last farewell; for I despair
To have you whole, and scorn to take you half. (*Exit.*)
VENT. I combat heav'n, which blasts my best designs:
My last attempt must be to win her back;
But oh! I fear in vain. (*Exit.*)
ANT. Why was I framed with this plain, honest heart,
Which knows not to disguise its griefs and weakness,
But bears its workings outward to the world?
I should have kept the mighty anguish in,
And forced a smile at Cleopatra's falsehood;
Octavia had believed it, and had stayed.
But I am made a shallow-forded stream,
Seen to the bottom, — all my clearness scorned,
And all my faults exposed! — See where he comes,

(*Enter* DOLABELLA.)

Who has profaned the sacred name of friend,
And worn it into vileness!
With how secure a brow, and specious form,
He gilds the secret villain! Sure that face
Was meant for honesty; but heav'n mismatched it,
And furnished treason out with nature's pomp,
To make its work more easy.
DOLA. O my friend!
ANT. Well, Dolabella, you performed my message?
DOLA. I did, unwillingly.
ANT. Unwillingly?
Was it so hard for you to bear our parting?
You should have wished it.
DOLA. Why?
ANT. Because you love me.
And she received my message with as true,
With as unfeigned a sorrow as you brought it?
DOLA. She loves you, even to madness.
ANT. Oh, I know it.
You, Dolabella, do not better know
How much she loves me. And should I
Forsake this beauty, this all-perfect creature?
DOLA. I could not, were she mine.
ANT. And yet you first

Persuaded me: how come you altered since?
Dola. I said at first I was not fit to go;
I could not hear her sighs, and see her tears,
But pity must prevail; and so, perhaps,
It may again with you; for I have promised,
That she should take her last farewell; and, see,
She comes to claim my word.

(*Enter* Cleopatra.)

Ant. False Dolabella!
Dola. What's false, my lord?
Ant. Why, Dolabella's false,
And Cleopatra's false; both false and faithless.
Draw near, you well-joined wickedness, you serpents,
Whom I have in my kindly bosom warmed
Till I am stung to death.
Dola. My lord, have I
Deserved to be thus used?
Cleo. Can heav'n prepare
A newer torment? Can it find a curse
Beyond our separation?
Ant. Yes, if fate
Be just, much greater: heav'n should be ingenious
In punishing such crimes. The rolling stone,
And gnawing vulture, were slight pains, invented
When Jove was young, and no examples known
Of mighty ills; but you have ripened sin,
To such a monstrous growth, 'twill pose the gods
To find an equal torture. Two, two such! —
Oh, there's no further name, two such! — to me,
To me, who locked my soul within your breasts,
Had no desires, no joys, no life, but you;
When half the globe was mine, I gave it you
In dowry with my heart; I had no use,
No fruit of all, but you; a friend and mistress
Was what the world could give. O Cleopatra!
O Dolabella! how could you betray
This tender heart, which with an infant fondness
Lay lulled betwixt your bosoms, and there slept,
Secure of injured faith?
Dola. If she has wronged you,
Heav'n, hell, and you revenge it.
Ant. If she wronged me!
Thou wouldst evade thy part of guilt; but swear
Thou lov'st not her.
Dola. Not so as I love you.
Ant. Not so? Swear, swear, I say, thou dost not love her.
Dola. No more than friendship will allow.
Ant. No more?
Friendship allows thee nothing; thou art perjured —
And yet thou didst not swear thou lov'dst her not;
But not so much, no more. O trifling hypocrite,
Who dar'st not own to her, thou dost not love,
Nor own to me, thou dost! Ventidius heard it;
Octavia saw it.
Cleo. They are enemies.
Ant. Alexas is not so: he, he confessed it:
He, who, next hell, best knew it, he avowed it.
(*To* Dola.) Why do I seek a proof beyond yourself?
You, whom I sent to bear my last farewell,
Returned to plead her stay.
Dola. What shall I answer?
If to have loved be guilt, then I have sinned;
But if to have repented of that love
Can wash away my crime, I have repented.
Yet, if I have offended past forgiveness,
Let not her suffer: she is innocent.
Cleo. Ah, what will not a woman do, who loves!
What means will she refuse, to keep that heart

Where all her joys are placed? 'Twas I encouraged,
'Twas I blew up the fire that scorched his soul,
To make you jealous, and by that regain you.
But all in vain; I could not counterfeit.
In spite of all the dams my love broke o'er,
And drowned my heart again. Fate took th' occasion;
And thus one minute's feigning has destroyed
My whole life's truth.
Ant. Thin cobweb arts of falsehood,
Seen, and broke through at first.
Dola. Forgive your mistress.
Cleo. Forgive your friend.
Ant. You have convinced yourselves,
You plead each other's cause. What witness have you,
That you but meant to raise my jealousy?
Cleo. Ourselves, and heav'n.
Ant. Guilt witnesses for guilt. Hence, love and friendship!
You have no longer place in human breasts,
These two have driv'n you out. Avoid my sight!
I would not kill the man whom I [have] loved,
And cannot hurt the woman; but avoid me, —
I do not know how long I can be tame.
For, if I stay one minute more to think
How I am wronged, my justice and revenge
Will cry so loud within me, that my pity
Will not be heard for either.
Dola. Heav'n has but
Our sorrow for our sins; and then delights
To pardon erring man: sweet mercy seems
Its darling attribute, which limits justice;
As if there were degrees in infinite,
And infinite would rather want perfection
Than punish to extent.
Ant. I can forgive
A foe, but not a mistress and a friend.
Treason is there in its most horrid shape,
Where trust is greatest; and the soul resigned
Is stabbed by its own guards. I'll hear no more;
Hence from my sight for ever!
Cleo. How? for ever!
I cannot go one moment from your sight,
And must I go for ever?
My joys, my only joys, are centered here.
What place have I to go to? My own kingdom?
That I have lost for you. Or to the Romans?
They hate me for your sake. Or must I wander
The wide world o'er, a helpless, banished woman,
Banished for love of you, banished from you?
Ay, there's the banishment! Oh, hear me! hear me,
With strictest justice, for I beg no favor;
And if I have offended you, then kill me,
But do not banish me.
Ant. I must not hear you.
I have a fool within me takes your part;
But honor stops my ears.
Cleo. For pity hear me!
Would you cast off a slave who followed you?
Who crouched beneath your spurn? — He has no pity!
See, if he gives one tear to my departure,
One look, one kind farewell: O iron heart!
Let all the gods look down, and judge betwixt us,
If he did ever love!
Ant. No more. —— Alexas!
Dola. A perjured villain!
Ant. (*to* Cleo.). Your Alexas, yours!
Cleo. Oh, 'twas his plot, his ruinous design,
T' engage you in my love by jealousy.
Hear him; confront him with me; let him speak.
Ant. I have; I have.
Cleo. And if he clear me not ——
Ant. Your creature! one who hangs upon your smiles!

Watches your eye, to say or to unsay,
Whate'er you please! I am not to be moved.
Cleo. Then must we part? Farewell, my cruel lord!
Th' appearance is against me; and I go,
Unjustified, for ever from your sight.
How I have loved, you know; how yet I love,
My only comfort is, I know myself:
I love you more, ev'n now you are unkind,
Than when you loved me most; so well, so truly,
I'll never strive against it; but die pleased,
To think you once were mine.
Ant. Good heav'n, they weep at parting!
Must I weep too? That calls 'em innocent.
I must not weep; and yet I must, to think
That I must not forgive. ——
Live, but live wretched; 'tis but just you should,
Who made me so. Live from each other's sight;
Let me not hear you meet. Set all the earth,
And all the seas, betwixt your sundered loves;
View nothing common but the sun and skies.
Now, all take several ways;
And each your own sad fate, with mine, deplore;
That you were false, and I could trust no more. (*Exeunt severally.*)

ACT V.

([*Enter*] Cleopatra, Charmion, [*and*] Iras.)

Char. Be juster, heav'n; such virtue punished thus,
Will make us think that chance rules all above,
And shuffles, with a random hand, the lots
Which man is forced to draw.
Cleo. I could tear out these eyes, that gained his heart,
And had not pow'r to keep it. Oh, the curse
Of doting on, ev'n when I find it dotage!
Bear witness, gods, you heard him bid me go;
You, whom he mocked with imprecating vows
Of promised faith! —— I'll die; I will not bear it.
(*She pulls out her dagger, and they hold her.*)
You may hold me ——
But I can keep my breath; I can die inward,
And choke this love.

(*Enter* Alexas.)

Iras. Help, O Alexas, help!
The queen grows desperate; her soul struggles in her
With all the agonies of love and rage,
And strives to force its passage.
Cleo. Let me go.
Art thou there, traitor! — Oh!
Oh, for a little breath, to vent my rage!
Give, give me way, and let me loose upon him.
Alex. Yes, I deserve it, for my ill-timed truth.
Was it for me to prop
The ruins of a falling majesty?
To place myself beneath the mighty flaw,
Thus to be crushed, and pounded into atoms,
By its o'erwhelming weight? 'Tis too presuming
For subjects to preserve that wilful pow'r,
Which courts its own destruction.
Cleo. I would reason
More calmly with you. Did not you o'errule,
And force my plain, direct, and open love
Into these crooked paths of jealousy?
Now, what's th' event? Octavia is removed;
But Cleopatra's banished. Thou, thou, villain,
Hast pushed my boat to open sea; to prove,
At my sad cost, if thou canst steer it back.
It cannot be; I'm lost too far; I'm ruined!
Hence, thou impostor, traitor, monster, devil! —
I can no more: thou, and my griefs, have sunk

Me down so low, that I want voice to curse thee.
Alex. Suppose some shipwrecked seaman near the shore,
Dropping and faint, with climbing up the cliff,
If, from above, some charitable hand
Pull him to safety, hazarding himself
To draw the other's weight; would he look back,
And curse him for his pains? The case is yours;
But one step more, and you have gained the height.
Cleo. Sunk, never more to rise.
Alex. Octavia's gone, and Dolabella banished.
Believe me, madam, Antony is yours.
His heart was never lost, but started off
To jealousy, love's last retreat and covert;
Where it lies hid in shades, watchful in silence,
And list'ning for the sound that calls it back.
Some other, any man ('tis so advanced),
May perfect this unfinished work, which I
(Unhappy only to myself) have left
So easy to his hand.
Cleo. Look well thou do't; else ——
Alex. Else, what your silence threatens. — Antony
Is mounted up the Pharos, from whose turret
He stands surveying our Egyptian galleys,
Engaged with Cæsar's fleet. Now death or conquest!
If the first happen, fate acquits my promise;
If we o'ercome, the conqueror is yours.
(*A distant shout within.*)
Char. Have comfort, madam: did you mark that shout?
(*Second shout nearer.*)
Iras. Hark! they redouble it.
Alex. 'Tis from the port.
The loudness shows it near: good news, kind heavens!
Cleo. Osiris make it so!

(*Enter* Serapion.)

Serap. Where, where's the queen?
Alex. How frightfully the holy coward stares!
As if not yet recovered of th' assault,
When all his gods, and, what's more dear to him,
His offerings, were at stake.
Serap. O horror, horror!
Egypt has been; our latest hour is come:
The queen of nations, from her ancient seat,
Is sunk for ever in the dark abyss:
Time has unrolled her glories to the last,
And now closed up the volume.
Cleo. Be more plain:
Say, whence thou com'st (though fate is in thy face,
Which from thy haggard eyes looks wildly out,
And threatens ere thou speak'st).
Serap. I came from Pharos;
From viewing (spare me, and imagine it)
Our land's last hope, your navy ——
Cleo. Vanquished?
Serap. No.
They fought not.
Cleo. Then they fled?
Serap. Nor that. I saw,
With Antony, your well-appointed fleet
Row out; and thrice he waved his hand on high,
And thrice with cheerful cries they shouted back:
'Twas then false Fortune, like a fawning strumpet,
About to leave the bankrupt prodigal,
With a dissembled smile would kiss at parting,
And flatter to the last; the well-timed oars
Now dipped from every bank, now smoothly run
To meet the foe; and soon indeed they met,
But not as foes. In few, we saw their caps
On either side thrown up; th' Egyptian galleys
(Received like friends) passed through, and fell behind
The Roman rear; and now, they all come forward,
And ride within the port.
Cleo. Enough, Serapion:
I've heard my doom. — This needed not, you gods:
When I lost Antony, your work was done;

'Tis but superfluous malice. — Where's my lord?
How bears he this last blow?
Serap. His fury cannot be expressed by words:
Thrice he attempted headlong to have fall'n
Full on his foes, and aimed at Cæsar's galley:
Withheld, he raves on you; cries, he's betrayed.
Should he now find you —
Alex. Shun him; seek your safety,
Till you can clear your innocence.
Cleo. I'll stay.
Alex. You must not; haste you to your monument,
While I make speed to Cæsar.
Cleo. Cæsar! No,
I have no business with him.
Alex. I can work him
To spare your life, and let this madman perish.
Cleo. Base fawning wretch! wouldst thou betray him too?
Hence from my sight! I will not hear a traitor;
'Twas thy design brought all this ruin on us.
Serapion, thou art honest; counsel me:
But haste, each moment's precious.
Serap. Retire; you must not yet see Antony.
He who began this mischief,
'Tis just he tempt the danger; let him clear you;
And, since he offered you his servile tongue,
To gain a poor precarious life from Cæsar,
Let him expose that fawning eloquence,
And speak to Antony.
Alex. O heavens! I dare not;
I meet my certain death.
Cleo. Slave, thou deserv'st it. —
Not that I fear my lord, will I avoid him;
I know him noble: when he banished me,
And thought me false, he scorned to take my life;
But I'll be justified, and then die with him.
Alex. Oh, pity me, and let me follow you!
Cleo. To death, if thou stir hence. Speak, if thou canst,
Now for thy life, which basely thou wouldst save;
While mine I prize at — this! Come, good Serapion.
(*Exeunt* Cleopatra, Serapion, Charmion, Iras.)
Alex. Oh, that I less could fear to lose this being,
Which, like a snowball in my coward hand,
The more 'tis grasped, the faster melts away.
Poor reason! what a wretched aid art thou!
For still, in spite of thee,
These two long lovers, soul and body, dread
Their final separation. Let me think:
What can I say, to save myself from death?
No matter what becomes of Cleopatra.
Ant. (*within*). Which way? where?
Vent. (*within*). This leads to th' monument.
Alex. Ah me! I hear him; yet I'm unprepared:
My gift of lying's gone;
And this court-devil, which I so oft have raised,
Forsakes me at my need. I dare not stay;
Yet cannot far go hence. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* Antony *and* Ventidius.)

Ant. O happy Cæsar! thou hast men to lead:
Think not 'tis thou hast conquered Antony;
But Rome has conquered Egypt. I'm betrayed.
Vent. Curse on this treach'rous train!
Their soil and heav'n infect 'em all with baseness:
And their young souls come tainted to the world
With the first breath they draw.
Ant. Th' original villain sure no god created;
He was a bastard of the sun, by Nile,
Aped into man, with all his mother's mud
Crusted about his soul.
Vent. The nation is
One universal traitor; and their queen
The very spirit and extract of 'em all.
Ant. Is there yet left

A possibility of aid from valor?
Is there one god unsworn to my destruction?
The least unmortgaged hope? for, if there be,
Methinks I cannot fall beneath the fate
Of such a boy as Cæsar.
The world's one half is yet in Antony;
And from each limb of it that's hewed away,
The soul comes back to me.
VENT. There yet remain
Three legions in the town; the last assault
Lopped off the rest. If death be your design
(As I must wish it now), these are sufficient
To make a heap about us of dead foes,
An honest pile for burial.
ANT. They're enough.
We'll not divide our stars; but side by side
Fight emulous, and with malicious eyes
Survey each other's acts. So every death
Thou giv'st, I'll take on me, as a just debt,
And pay thee back a soul.
VENT. Now you shall see I love you. Not a word
Of chiding more. By my few hours of life,
I am so pleased with this brave Roman fate,
That I would not be Cæsar, to outlive you.
When we put off this flesh, and mount together,
I shall be shown to all th' ethereal crowd,—
"Lo, this is he who died with Antony!"
ANT. Who knows but we may pierce through all their troops,
And reach my veterans yet? 'Tis worth the tempting,
T' o'erleap this gulf of fate,
And leave our wond'ring destinies behind.

(*Enter* ALEXAS, *trembling*.)

VENT. See, see, that villain!
See Cleopatra stamped upon that face,
With all her cunning, all her arts of falsehood!
How she looks out through those dissembling eyes!
How he has set his count'nance for deceit,
And promises a lie, before he speaks!
Let me despatch him first. (*Drawing*.)
ALEX. Oh, spare me, spare me!
ANT. Hold; he's not worth your killing. — On thy life
(Which thou may'st keep, because I scorn to take it),
No syllable to justify thy queen;
Save thy base tongue its office.
ALEX. Sir, she's gone,
Where she shall never be molested more
By love, or you.
ANT. Fled to her Dolabella!
Die, traitor! I revoke my promise! die!
(*Going to kill him*.)
ALEX. Oh, hold! she is not fled.
ANT. She is: my eyes
Are open to her falsehood; my whole life
Has been a golden dream of love and friendship.
But, now I wake, I'm like a merchant, roused
From soft repose, to see his vessel sinking,
And all his wealth cast o'er. Ingrateful woman!
Who followed me, but as the swallow summer,
Hatching her young ones in my kindly beams,
Singing her flatt'ries to my morning wake;
But, now my winter comes, she spreads her wings,
And seeks the spring of Cæsar.
ALEX. Think not so:
Her fortunes have, in all things, mixed with yours.
Had she betrayed her naval force to Rome,
How easily might she have gone to Cæsar,
Secure by such a bribe!
VENT. She sent it first,
To be more welcome after.
ANT. 'Tis too plain;
Else would she have appeared, to clear herself.
ALEX. Too fatally she has; she could not bear
To be accused by you; but shut herself
Within her monument; looked down and sighed;
While, from her unchanged face, the silent tears
Dropped, as they had not leave, but stole their parting.

Some undistinguished words she inly murmured;
At last, she raised her eyes; and, with such looks
As dying Lucrece cast, ——
Ant. My heart forebodes ——
Vent. All for the best; go on.
Alex. She snatched her poniard,
And, ere we could prevent the fatal blow,
Plunged it within her breast. Then turned to me:
"Go, bear my lord," said she, "my last farewell;
And ask him if he yet suspect my faith."
More she was saying, but death rushed betwixt.
She half pronounced your name with her last breath,
And buried half within her.
Vent. Heav'n be praised!
Ant. Then art thou innocent, my poor dear love,
And art thou dead?
Oh, those two words! their sound should be divided:
Hadst thou been false, and died; or hadst thou lived,
And hadst been true. — But innocence and death!
This shows not well above. Then what am I,
The murderer of this truth, this innocence!
Thoughts cannot form themselves in words so horrid
As can express my guilt!
Vent. Is't come to this? The gods have been too gracious;
And thus you thank 'em for't!
Ant. (*to* Alex.). Why stay'st thou here?
Is it for thee to spy upon my soul,
And see its inward mourning? Get thee hence!
Thou art not worthy to behold, what now
Becomes a Roman emperor to perform.
Alex. (*aside*). He loves her still:
His grief betrays it. Good! The joy to find
She's yet alive, completes the reconcilement.
I've saved myself, and her. But, oh! the Romans!
Fate comes too fast upon my wit,
Hunts me too hard, and meets me at each double. (*Exit.*)
Vent. Would she had died a little sooner, though,
Before Octavia went; you might have treated:
Now 'twill look tame, and would not be received.
Come, rouse yourself, and let's die warm together.
Ant. I will not fight: there's no more work for war.
The bus'ness of my angry hours is done.
Vent. Cæsar is at your gates.
Ant. Why, let him enter;
He's welcome now.
Vent. What lethargy has crept into your soul?
Ant. 'Tis but a scorn of life, and just desire
To free myself from bondage.
Vent. Do it bravely.
Ant. I will; but not by fighting. O Ventidius!
What should I fight for now? My queen is dead.
I was but great for her; my pow'r, my empire,
Were but my merchandise to buy her love;
And conquered kings, my factors. Now she's dead,
Let Cæsar take the world, —
An empty circle, since the jewel's gone
Which made it worth my strife: my being's nauseous;
For all the bribes of life are gone away.
Vent. Would you be taken?
Ant. Yes, I would be taken;
But, as a Roman ought, — dead, my Ventidius:
For I'll convey my soul from Cæsar's reach,
And lay down life myself. 'Tis time the world
Should have a lord, and know whom to obey.
We two have kept its homage in suspense,
And bent the globe, on whose each side we trod,
Till it was dinted inwards. Let him walk
Alone upon't; I'm weary of my part.

My torch is out; and the world stands before me
Like a black desert at th' approach of night:
I'll lay me down, and stray no farther on.
Vent. I could be grieved,
But that I'll not outlive you: choose your death;
For, I have seen him in such various shapes,
I care not which I take: I'm only troubled,
The life I bear is worn to such a rag,
'Tis scarce worth giving. I could wish, indeed,
We threw it from us with a better grace;
That, like two lions taken in the toils,
We might at least thrust out our paws, and wound
The hunters that inclose us.
Ant. I have thought on't.
Ventidius, you must live.
Vent. I must not, sir.
Ant. Wilt thou not live, to speak some good of me?
To stand by my fair fame, and guard th' approaches
From the ill tongues of men?
Vent. Who shall guard mine,
For living after you?
Ant. Say, I command it.
Vent. If we die well, our deaths will speak themselves
And need no living witness.
Ant. Thou hast loved me,
And fain I would reward thee. I must die;
Kill me, and take the merit of my death
To make thee friends with Cæsar.
Vent. Thank your kindness.
You said I loved you; and, in recompense,
You bid me turn a traitor. Did I think
You would have used me thus? — that I should die
With a hard thought of you?
Ant. Forgive me, Roman.
Since I have heard of Cleopatra's death,
My reason bears no rule upon my tongue,
But lets my thoughts break all at random out.
I've thought better; do not deny me twice.
Vent. By heav'n, I will not.
Let it not be t' outlive you.
Ant. Kill me first,
And then die thou; for 'tis but just thou serve
Thy friend, before thyself.
Vent. Give me your hand.
We soon shall meet again. Now, farewell, emperor! — (*Embrace.*)
Methinks that word's too cold to be my last:
Since death sweeps all distinctions, farewell, friend!
That's all. ——
I will not make a bus'ness of a trifle;
And yet I cannot look on you, and kill you;
Pray turn your face.
Ant. I do: strike home, be sure.
Vent. Home as my sword will reach.
(*Kills himself.*)
Ant. Oh, thou mistak'st!
That wound was none of thine; give it me back;
Thou robb'st me of my death!
Vent. I do indeed;
But think 'tis the first time I e'er deceived you,
If that may plead my pardon. — And you, gods,
Forgive me, if you will; for I die perjured,
Rather than kill my friend. (*Dies.*)
Ant. Farewell! Ever my leader, ev'n in death!
My queen and thou have got the start of me,
And I'm the lag of honor. — Gone so soon?
Is Death no more? He used him carelessly,
With a familiar kindness; ere he knocked,
Ran to the door, and took him in his arms,
As who should say, "Y'are welcome at all hours,
A friend need give no warning." Books had spoiled him;
For all the learned are cowards by profession.
'Tis not worth
My farther thought; for death, for aught I know,
Is but to think no more. Here's to be satisfied. (*Falls on his sword.*)
I've missed my heart. O unperforming hand!

Thou never couldst have erred in a worse time.
My fortune jades me to the last; and death,
Like a great man, takes state, and makes me wait
For my admittance. ——
(*Trampling within*)
Some, perhaps, from Cæsar:
If he should find me living, and suspect
That I played booty with my life! I'll mend
My work, ere they can reach me.
(*Rises upon his knees.*)

(*Enter* Cleopatra, Charmion, Iras.)

Cleo. Where is my lord! where is he?
Char. There he lies,
And dead Ventidius by him.
Cleo. My fears were prophets; I am come too late.
Oh, that accursed Alexas! (*Runs to him.*)
Ant. Art thou living?
Or am I dead before I knew, and thou
The first kind ghost that meets me?
Cleo. Help me seat him.
Send quickly, send for help!
(*They place him in a chair.*)
Ant. I am answered.
We live both. Sit thee down, my Cleopatra:
I'll make the most I can of life, to stay
A moment more with thee.
Cleo. How is it with you?
Ant. 'Tis as with a man
Removing in a hurry; all packed up,
But one dear jewel that his haste forgot;
And he, for that, returns upon the spur:
So I come back, for thee.
Cleo. Too long, you heav'ns, you have been cruel to me;
Now show your mended faith, and give me back
His fleeting life!
Ant. It will not be, my love.
I keep my soul by force.
Say but thou art not false.
Cleo. 'Tis now too late
To say I'm true: I'll prove it, and die with you.
Unknown to me, Alexas feigned my death;
Which, when I knew, I hasted to prevent
This fatal consequence. My fleet betrayed
Both you and me.
Ant. And Dolabella ——
Cleo. Scarce
Esteemed before he loved; but hated now.
Ant. Enough: my life's not long enough for more.
Thou say'st thou wilt come after: I believe thee;
For I can now believe whate'er thou say'st
That we may part more kindly.
Cleo. I will come:
Doubt not, my life, I'll come, and quickly too:
Cæsar shall triumph o'er no part of thee.
Ant. But grieve not, while thou stay'st,
My last disastrous times:
Think we have had a clear and glorious day,
And heav'n did kindly to delay the storm,
Just till our close of ev'ning. Ten years' love,
And not a moment lost, but all improved
To th' utmost joys! — What ages have we lived!
And now to die each other's; and, so dying,
While hand in hand we walk in groves below,
Whole troops of lovers' ghosts shall flock about us,
And all the train be ours.
Cleo. Your words are like the notes of dying swans,
Too sweet to last. Were there so many hours
For your unkindness, and not one for love?
Ant. No, not a minute. — This one kiss — more worth
Than all I leave to Cæsar. (*Dies.*)
Cleo. Oh, tell me so again,
And take ten thousand kisses for that word.
My lord, my lord! speak, if you yet have being;
Sigh to me, if you cannot speak; or cast
One look! Do anything that shows you live.
Iras. He's gone too far to hear you;
And this you see, a lump of senseless clay,
The leavings of a soul.

Char. Remember, madam,
He charged you not to grieve.
Cleo. And I'll obey him.
I have not loved a Roman not to know
What should become his wife; his wife, my Charmion,
For 'tis to that high title I aspire,
And now I'll not die less! Let dull Octavia
Survive, to mourn him dead: my nobler fate
Shall knit our spousals with a tie too strong
For Roman laws to break.
Iras. Will you then die?
Cleo. Why shouldst thou make that question?
Iras. Cæsar is merciful.
Cleo. Let him be so
To those that want his mercy; my poor lord
Make no such cov'nant with him, to spare me
When he was dead. Yield me to Cæsar's pride?
What! to be led in triumph through the streets,
A spectacle to base plebeian eyes;
While some dejected friend of Antony's,
Close in a corner, shakes his head, and mutters
A secret curse on her who ruined him?
I'll none of that.
Char. Whatever you resolve,
I'll follow, ev'n to death.
Iras. I only feared
For you; but more should fear to live without you.
Cleo. Why, now 'tis as it should be. Quick, my friends,
Dispatch; ere this, the town's in Cæsar's hands:
My lord looks down concerned, and fears my stay,
Lest I should be surprised;
Keep him not waiting for his love too long.
You, Charmion, bring my crown and richest jewels;
With 'em, the wreath of victory I made
(Vain augury!) for him who now lies dead.
You, Iras, bring the cure of all our ills.
Iras. The aspics, madam?
Cleo. Must I bid you twice?
(*Exeunt* Charmion *and* Iras.)
'Tis sweet to die, when they would force life on me,
To rush into the dark abode of Death,
And seize him first; if he be like my love,
He is not frightful, sure.
We're now alone, in secrecy and silence;
And is not this like lovers? I may kiss
These pale, cold lips; Octavia does not see me;
And, oh! 'tis better far to have him thus,
Than see him in her arms. — Oh, welcome, welcome!

(*Enter* Charmion [*and*] Iras.)

Char. What must be done?
Cleo. Short ceremony, friends;
But yet it must be decent. First, this laurel
Shall crown my hero's head: he fell not basely,
Nor left his shield behind him. — Only thou
Couldst triumph o'er thyself; and thou alone
Wert worthy so to triumph.
Char. To what end
These ensigns of your pomp and royalty?
Cleo. Dull that thou art! why, 'tis to meet my love;
As when I saw him first, on Cydnos' bank,
All sparkling, like a goddess: so adorned,
I'll find him once again; my second spousals
Shall match my first in glory. Haste, haste, both,
And dress the bride of Antony.
Char. 'Tis done.
Cleo. Now seat me by my lord. I claim this place;
For I must conquer Cæsar too, like him,
And win my share o' th' world. — Hail, you dear relics
Of my immortal love!
Oh, let no impious hand remove you hence;
But rest for ever here! Let Egypt give
His death that peace, which it denied his life. —
Reach me the casket.
Iras. Underneath the fruit
The aspic lies.

Cleo. (*putting aside the leaves*). Welcome, thou kind deceiver!
Thou best of thieves, who, with an easy key,
Dost open life, and, unperceived by us,
Ev'n steal us from ourselves; discharging so
Death's dreadful office, better than himself;
Touching our limbs so gently into slumber,
That Death stands by, deceived by his own image,
And thinks himself but Sleep.
Serap. (*within*). The queen, where is she?
The town is yielded, Cæsar's at the gates.
Cleo. He comes too late t' invade the rights of death.
Haste, bare my arm, and rouse the serpent's fury.
(*Holds out her arm, and draws it back.*)
Coward flesh,
Wouldst thou conspire with Cæsar to betray me,
As thou wert none of mine? I'll force thee to't,
And not be sent by him,
But bring, myself, my soul to Antony.
(*Turns aside, and then shows her arm bloody.*)
Take hence; the work is done.
Serap. (*within*). Break ope the door,
And guard the traitor well.
Char. The next is ours.
Iras. Now, Charmion, to be worthy
Of our great queen and mistress.
(*They apply the aspics.*)
Cleo. Already, death, I feel thee in my veins;
I go with such a will to find my lord,
That we shall quickly meet.
A heavy numbness creeps through every limb,
And now 'tis at my head; my eyelids fall,
And my dear love is vanished in a mist.
Where shall I find him, where? Oh, turn me to him,
And lay me on his breast! — Cæsar, thy worst;
Now part us, if thou canst. (*Dies.*)
(Iras *sinks down at her feet, and dies;* Charmion *stands behind her chair, as dressing her head.*)

(*Enter* Serapion, *two Priests,* Alexas *bound, Egyptians.*)

2 Priests. Behold, Serapion
What havoc death has made!
Serap. 'Twas what I feared. —
Charmion, is this well done?
Char. Yes, 'tis well done, and like a queen, the last
Of her great race: I follow her.
(*Sinks down: dies.*)
Alex. 'Tis true,
She has done well: much better thus to die,
Than live to make a holiday in Rome.
Serap. See, see how the lovers sit in state together,
As they were giving laws to half mankind!
Th' impression of a smile, left in her face,
Shows she died pleased with him for whom she lived,
And went to charm him in another world.
Cæsar's just ent'ring: grief has now no leisure.
Secure that villain, as our pledge of safety,
To grace th' imperial triumph. — Sleep, blessed pair,
Secure from human chance, long ages out,
While all the storms of fate fly o'er your tomb;

And fame to late posterity shall tell,
No lovers lived so great, or died so well.

EPILOGUE

Poets, like disputants, when reasons fail,
Have one sure refuge left — and that's to rail.
Fop, coxcomb, fool, are thundered through the pit;
And this is all their equipage of wit.
We wonder how the devil this diff'rence grows,
Betwixt our fools in verse, and yours in prose:
For, 'faith, the quarrel rightly understood,
'Tis civil war with their own flesh and blood.
The threadbare author hates the gaudy coat;
And swears at the gilt coach, but swears afoot:
For 'tis observed of every scribbling man,
He grows a fop as fast as e'er he can;
Prunes up, and asks his oracle, the glass,
If pink or purple best become his face.
For our poor wretch, he neither rails nor prays;
Nor likes your wit just as you like his plays;
He has not yet so much of Mr. Bayes.
He does his best; and if he cannot please,
Would quietly sue out his writ of ease.
Yet, if he might his own grand jury call,
By the fair sex he begs to stand or fall.
Let Cæsar's pow'r the men's ambition move,
But grace you him who lost the world for love!
Yet if some antiquated lady say,
The last age is not copied in his play;
Heav'n help the man who for that face must drudge,
Which only has the wrinkles of a judge.
Let not the young and beauteous join with those;
For should you raise such numerous hosts of foes,
Young wits and sparks he to his aid must call;
'Tis more than one man's work to please you all.

FINIS

VENICE PRESERVED
OR, A PLOT DISCOVERED

By THOMAS OTWAY

(1682)

PERSONÆ DRAMATIS

Duke of Venice.
Priuli, father to Belvidera, a senator.
Antonio, a fine speaker in the Senate.
[Bedamar, the Spanish Ambassador.]

Jaffeir
Pierre
Renault
Spinosa
Theodore
Eliot
Revillido
Durand
Mezzana
Brainveil
Ternon
Brabe
[Retrosi]
Conspirators.

Belvidera.
Aquilina.

Two women, attendants on Belvidera.
Two women, servants to Aquilina.
The Council of Ten.
Officer.
Guards.
Friar.
Executioner and rabble.

[Scene — Venice.]

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

TO HER GRACE

THE DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH

MADAM,

Were it possible for me to let the world know how entirely your Grace's goodness has devoted a poor man to your service; were there words enough in speech to express the mighty sense I have of your great bounty towards me; surely I should write and talk of it for ever: but your Grace has given me so large a theme, and laid so very vast a foundation, that imagination wants stock to build upon it. I am as one dumb when I would speak of it, and when I strive to write, I want a scale of thought sufficient to comprehend the height of it. Forgive me, then, madam, if (as a poor peasant once made a present of an apple to an emperor) I bring this small tribute, the humble growth of my little garden, and lay it at your feet. Believe it is paid you with the utmost gratitude, believe that so long as I have thought to remember how very much I owe your generous nature, I will ever have a heart that shall be grateful for it too: Your grace, next Heaven, deserves it amply from me; that gave me life, but on a hard condition, till your extended favor taught me·to prize the gift, and took the heavy burden it was clogged with from me: I mean hard fortune. When I had enemies, that with malicious power kept back and shaded me from those royal beams, whose warmth is all I have, or hope to live by, your noble pity and compassion found me, where I was far cast backward from my blessing; down in the rear of Fortune, called me up, placed me in the shine, and I have felt its comfort. You have in that restored me to my native right, for a steady faith, and loyalty to my prince, was all the inheritance my father left me, and however hardly my ill fortune deal with me, 'tis what I prize so well that I ne'er pawned it yet, and hope I ne'er shall part with it. Nature and Fortune were certainly in league when you were born, and as the first took care to give you beauty enough to enslave the hearts of all the world, so the other resolved to do its merit justice, that none but a monarch, fit to rule that world, should e'er possess it, and in it he had an empire. The young prince you have given him, by his blooming virtues, early declares the mighty stock he came from; and as you have taken all the pious care of a dear mother and a prudent guardian to give him a noble and generous education, may it succeed according to his merits and your wishes: may he grow up to be a bulwark to his illustrious father, and a patron to his loyal subjects, with wisdom and learning to assist him, whenever called to his councils, to defend his right against the encroachments of republicans in his senates, to cherish such men as shall be able to vindicate the royal cause, that good and fit servants to the crown may never be lost for want of a protector. May he have courage and conduct, fit to fight his battles abroad, and terrify his rebels at home; and that all these may be yet more sure, may he never, during the spring-time of his years, when these growing virtues ought with care to be cherished, in order to their ripening, may he never meet with vicious natures, or the tongues of faithless, sordid, insipid flatterers, to blast 'em. To conclude: may he be as great as the hand of Fortune (with his honor) shall be able to make him: and may your grace, who are so good a mistress, and so noble a patroness, never meet with a less grateful servant than, madam, your grace's entirely devoted creature,

THOMAS OTWAY.

PROLOGUE

In these distracted times, when each man dreads
The bloody stratagems of busy heads;
When we have feared three years we know not what,
Till witnesses began to die o' th' rot,
What made our poet meddle with a plot?
Was't that he fancied, for the very sake
And name of plot, his trifling play might take?
For there's not in't one inch-board evidence,
But 'tis, he says, to reason plain and sense,
And that he thinks a plausible defence.
Were Truth by Sense and Reason to be tried,
Sure all our swearers might be laid aside:
No, of such tools our author has no need,
To make his plot, or make his play succeed;
He, of black Bills, has no prodigious tales,
Or Spanish pilgrims cast ashore in Wales;
Here's not one murthered magistrate at least,
Kept rank like ven'son for a city feast,
Grown four days stiff, the better to prepare
And fit his pliant limbs to ride in chair:
Yet here's an army raised, though under ground,
But no man seen, nor one commission found;
Here is a traitor too, that's very old,
Turbulent, subtle, mischievous, and bold,
Bloody, revengeful, and to crown his part,
Loves fumbling with a wench, with all his heart;
Till after having many changes passed,
In spite of age (thanks heaven) is hanged at last:
Next is a senator that keeps a whore,
In Venice none a higher office bore;
To lewdness every night the lecher ran,
Show me, all London, such another man,
Match him at Mother Creswold's if you can.
O Poland, Poland! had it been thy lot,
T' have heard in time of this Venetian plot,
Thou surely chosen hadst one king from thence,
And honored them as thou hast England since.

VENICE PRESERVED

OR, A PLOT DISCOVERED

ACT I

Scene I

(*Enter* Priuli *and* Jaffeir.)

Priu. No more! I'll hear no more; begone and leave.
Jaff. Not hear me! by my sufferings but you shall!
My lord, my lord! I'm not that abject wretch
You think me. Patience! where's the distance throws
Me back so far, but I may boldly speak
In right, though proud oppression will not hear me!
Priu. Have you not wronged me?
Jaff. Could my nature e'er
Have brooked injustice or the doing wrongs,
I need not now thus low have bent myself,
To gain a hearing from a cruel father!
Wronged you?
Priu. Yes! wronged me, in the nicest point:
The honor of my house; you have done me wrong;
You may remember (for I now will speak,
And urge its baseness): when you first came home
From travel, with such hopes as made you looked on
By all men's eyes, a youth of expectation,
Pleased with your growing virtue, I received you,
Courted, and sought to raise you to your merits.
My house, my table, nay my fortune too,
My very self, was yours; you might have used me
To your best service; like an open friend,
I treated, trusted you, and thought you mine;
When in requital of my best endeavors,
You treacherously practised to undo me,
Seduced the weakness of my age's darling,
My only child, and stole her from my bosom:
O Belvidera!
Jaff. 'Tis to me you owe her,
Childless you had been else, and in the grave,
Your name extinct, nor no more Priuli heard of.
You may remember, scarce five years are past,
Since in your brigandine you sailed to see
The Adriatic wedded by our Duke,
And I was with you. Your unskilful pilot
Dashed us upon a rock. When to your boat
You made for safety, entered first yourself.
The affrighted Belvidera following next,
As she stood trembling on the vessel side,
Was by a wave washed off into the deep,
When instantly I plunged into the sea,
And buffeting the billows to her rescue,
Redeemed her life with half the loss of mine.
Like a rich conquest in one hand I bore her,
And with the other dashed the saucy waves
That thronged and pressed to rob me of my prize.
I brought her, gave her to your despairing arms.
Indeed you thanked me; but a nobler gratitude
Rose in her soul: for from that hour she loved me,
Till for her life she paid me with herself.
Priu. You stole her from me, like a thief you stole her,
At dead of night; that cursed hour you chose
To rifle me of all my heart held dear.

May all your joys in her prove false like mine;
A sterile fortune, and a barren bed,
Attend you both; continual discord make
Your days and nights bitter and grievous; still
May the hard hand of a vexatious need
Oppress, and grind you; till at last you find
The curse of disobedience all your portion.
Jaff. Half of your curse you have bestowed in vain;
Heav'n has already crowned our faithful loves
With a young boy, sweet as his mother's beauty.
May he live to prove more gentle than his grandsire,
And happier than his father!
Priu. Rather live
To bait thee for his bread, and din your ears
With hungry cries; whilst his unhappy mother
Sits down and weeps in bitterness of want.
Jaff. You talk as if it would please you.
Priu. 'Twould by Heav'n!
Once she was dear indeed; the drops that fell
From my sad heart, when she forgot her duty,
The fountain of my life was not so precious.
But she is gone, and if I am a man,
I will forget her.
Jaff. Would I were in my grave!
Priu. And she too with thee;
For, living here, you're but my cursed remembrancers
I once was happy.
Jaff. You use me thus, because you know my soul
Is fond of Belvidera: you perceive
My life feeds on her, therefore thus you treat me.
Oh! could my soul ever have known satiety!
Were I that thief, the doer of such wrongs
As you upbraid me with, what hinders me,
But I might send her back to you with contumely,
And court my fortune where she would be kinder!
Priu. You dare not do't ——
Jaff. Indeed, my lord, I dare not.
My heart that awes me is too much my master.
Three years are past since first our vows were plighted,
During which time, the world must bear me witness,
I have treated Belvidera like your daughter,
The daughter of a senator of Venice.
Distinction, place, attendance, and observance,
Due to her birth, she always has commanded.
Out of my little fortune I have done this,
Because (though hopeless e'er to win your nature)
The world might see, I loved her for herself,
Not as the heiress of the great Priuli. ——
Priu. No more!
Jaff. Yes! all, and then adieu for ever.
There's not a wretch that lives on common charity
But's happier than me: for I have known
The luscious sweets of plenty; every night
Have slept with soft content about my head,
And never waked but to a joyful morning;
Yet now must fall like a full ear of corn,
Whose blossom scaped, yet's withered in the ripening.
Priu. Home and be humble, study to retrench;
Discharge the lazy vermin of thy hall,
Those pageants of thy folly;
Reduce the glittering trappings of thy wife
To humble weeds, fit for thy little state;
Then to some suburb cottage both retire;
Drudge, to feed loathsome life; get brats, and starve ——
Home, home, I say. —— (*Exit* Priuli.)
Jaff. Yes, if my heart would let me —
This proud, this swelling heart: home I would go,
But that my doors are hateful to my eyes,
Filled and dammed up with gaping creditors,
Watchful as fowlers when their game will spring.

I have now not fifty ducats in the world,
Yet still I am in love, and pleased with ruin.
O Belvidera! oh, she's my wife —
And we will bear our wayward fate together,
But ne'er know comfort more.

(*Enter* Pierre.)

Pierr. My friend, good morrow!
How fares the honest partner of my heart?
What, melancholy! not a word to spare me?
Jaff. I'm thinking, Pierre, how that damned starving quality,
Called honesty, got footing in the world.
Pierr. Why, pow'rful villainy first set it up,
For its own ease and safety: honest men
Are the soft easy cushions on which knaves
Repose and fatten: were all mankind villains,
They'd starve each other; lawyers would want practice,
Cut-throats rewards: each man would kill his brother
Himself, none would be paid or hanged for murder.
Honesty was a cheat invented first
To bind the hands of bold deserving rogues,
That fools and cowards might sit safe in power,
And lord it uncontrolled above their betters.
Jaff. Then honesty is but a notion.
Pierr. Nothing else;
Like wit, much talked of, not to be defined;
He that pretends to most, too, has least share in't;
'Tis a ragged virtue. Honesty! no more on't.
Jaff. Sure, thou art honest?
Pierr. So indeed men think me.
But they're mistaken, Jaffeir: I am a rogue
As well as they,
A fine gay bold-faced villain, as thou seest me;
'Tis true, I pay my debts when they're contracted;
I steal from no man; would not cut a throat
To gain admission to a great man's purse,
Or a whore's bed; I'd not betray my friend,
To get his place or fortune; I scorn to flatter
A blown-up fool above me, or crush the wretch beneath me;
Yet, Jaffeir, for all this, I am a villain!
Jaff. A villain ——
Pierr. Yes, a most notorious villain:
To see the suff'rings of my fellow-creatures,
And own myself a man; to see our senators
Cheat the deluded people with a show
Of liberty, which yet they ne'er must taste of.
They say, by them our hands are free from fetters,
Yet whom they please they lay in basest bonds;
Bring whom they please to infamy and sorrow;
Drive us like wracks down the rough tide of power,
Whilst no hold's left to save us from destruction.
All that bear this are villains; and I one,
Not to rouse up at the great call of nature,
And check the growth of these domestic spoilers,
That makes us slaves and tells us 'tis our charter.
Jaff. O Aquilina! Friend, to lose such beauty,
The dearest purchase of thy noble labors;
She was thy right by conquest, as by love.
Pierr. O Jaffeir! I'd so fixed my heart upon her,
That wheresoe'er I framed a scheme of life
For time to come, she was my only joy
With which I wished to sweeten future cares;
I fancied pleasures, none but one that loves
And dotes as I did can imagine like 'em;
When in the extremity of all these hopes,
In the most charming hour of expectation,
Then when our eager wishes soar the highest,
Ready to stoop and grasp the lovely game,
A haggard owl, a worthless kite of prey,
With his foul wings sailed in and spoiled my quarry.
Jaff. I know the wretch, and scorn him as thou hat'st him.

Pierr. Curse on the common good that's so protected,
Where every slave that heaps up wealth enough
To do much wrong, becomes a lord of right!
I, who believed no ill could e'er come near me,
Found in the embraces of my Aquilina
A wretched old but itching senator,
A wealthy fool, that had bought out my title,
A rogue, that uses beauty like a lambskin,
Barely to keep him warm. That filthy cuckoo too
Was in my absence crept into my nest,
And spoiling all my brood of noble pleasure.
Jaff. Didst thou not chase him thence?
Pierr. I did, and drove
The rank old bearded Hirco stinking home.
The matter was complained of in the Senate,
I summoned to appear, and censured basely,
For violating something they call *privilege* —
This was the recompense of my service.
Would I'd been rather beaten by a coward!
A soldier's mistress, Jaffeir, 's his religion,
When that's profaned, all other ties are broken;
That even dissolves all former bonds of service,
And from that hour I think myself as free
To be the foe as e'er the friend of Venice. —
Nay, dear Revenge, whene'er thou call'st I'm ready.
Jaff. I think no safety can be here for virtue,
And grieve, my friend, as much as thou to live
In such a wretched state as this of Venice,
Where all agree to spoil the public good,
And villains fatten with the brave man's labors.
Pierr. We have neither safety, unity, nor peace,
For the foundation's lost of common good;
Justice is lame as well as blind amongst us;
The laws (corrupted to their ends that make 'em)
Serve but for instruments of some new tyranny,
That every day starts up to enslave us deeper.
Now could this glorious cause but find out friends
To do it right! O Jaffeir! then might'st thou
Not wear these seals of woe upon thy face,
The proud Priuli should be taught humanity,
And learn to value such a son as thou art.
I dare not speak! But my heart bleeds this moment!
Jaff. Cursed be the cause, though I thy friend be part on't!
Let me partake the troubles of thy bosom,
For I am used to misery, and perhaps
May find a way to sweeten't to thy spirit.
Pierr. Too soon it will reach thy knowledge ——
Jaff. Then from thee
Let it proceed. There's virtue in thy friendship
Would make the saddest tale of sorrow pleasing,
Strengthen my constancy, and welcome ruin.
Pierr. Then thou art ruined!
Jaff. That I long since knew,
I and ill-fortune have been long acquaintance.
Pierr. I passed this very moment by thy doors,
And found them guarded by a troop of villains;
The sons of public rapine were destroying —
They told me, by the sentence of the law
They had commission to seize all thy fortune,
Nay more, Priuli's cruel hand hath signed it.
Here stood a ruffian with a horrid face
Lording it o'er a pile of massy plate,
Tumbled into a heap for public sale.
There was another making villainous jests
At thy undoing; he had ta'en possession
Of all thy ancient most domestic ornaments,

Rich hangings, intermixed and wrought with gold;
The very bed, which on thy wedding-night
Received thee to the arms of Belvidera,
The scene of all thy joys, was violated
By the coarse hands of filthy dungeon villains,
And thrown amongst the common lumber.
Jaff. Now thanks, Heav'n ——
Pierr. Thank Heav'n! for what?
Jaff. That I am not worth a ducat.
Pierr. Curse thy dull stars, and the worse fate of Venice,
Where brothers, friends, and fathers, all are false;
Where there's no trust, no truth; where Innocence
Stoops under vile Oppression, and Vice lords it!
Hadst thou but seen, as I did, how at last
Thy beauteous Belvidera, like a wretch
That's doomed to banishment, came weeping forth,
Shining through tears, like April suns in showers
That labor to o'ercome the cloud that loads 'm,
Whilst two young virgins, on whose arms she leaned,
Kindly looked up, and at her grief grew sad,
As if they catched the sorrows that fell from her!
Even the lewd rabble that were gathered round
To see the sight, stood mute when they beheld her;
Governed their roaring throats and grumbled pity.
I could have hugged the greasy rogues: they pleased me.
Jaff. I thank thee for this story from my soul,
Since now I know the worst that can befall me.
Ah, Pierre! I have a heart that could have borne
The roughest wrong my fortune could have done me;
But when I think what Belvidera feels,
The bitterness her tender spirit tastes of,
I own myself a coward. Bear my weakness,
If throwing thus my arms about thy neck,
I play the boy, and blubber in thy bosom.
Oh! I shall drown thee with my sorrows!
Pierr. Burn!
First burn, and level Venice to thy ruin!
What! starve like beggars' brats in frosty weather,
Under a hedge, and whine ourselves to death!
Thou, or thy cause, shall never want assistance,
Whilst I have blood or fortune fit to serve thee;
Command my heart: thou art every way its master.
Jaff. No; there's a secret pride in bravely dying.
Pierr. Rats die in holes and corners, dogs run mad;
Man knows a braver remedy for sorrow:
Revenge! the attribute of gods. They stamped it
With their great image on our natures. Die!
Consider well the cause that calls upon thee;
And if thou'rt base enough, die then. Remember
Thy Belvidera suffers. Belvidera!
Die! — damn first! — what, be decently interred
In a churchyard, and mingle thy brave dust
With stinking rogues that rot in dirty winding-sheets,
Surfeit-slain fools, the common dung o' th' soil?
Jaff. Oh!
Pierr. Well said, out with't, swear a little ——
Jaff. Swear!
By sea and air! by earth, by heaven and hell,
I will revenge my Belvidera's tears!
Hark thee, my friend — Priuli — is — a Senator!
Pierr. A dog!
Jaff. Agreed.
Pierr. Shoot him!

JAFF. With all my heart.
No more — where shall we meet at night?
PIERR. I'll tell thee.
On the Rialto every night at twelve!
I take my evening's walk of meditation;
There we two will meet, and talk of precious
Mischief ——
JAFF. Farewell.
PIERR. At twelve.
JAFF. At any hour, my plagues
Will keep me waking. (*Ex.* PIERR.)
Tell me why, good Heav'n,
Thou mad'st me what I am, with all the spirit,
Aspiring thoughts and elegant desires
That fill the happiest man? Ah! rather why
Didst thou not form me sordid as my fate,
Base-minded, dull, and fit to carry burdens?
Why have I sense to know the curse that's on me?
Is this just dealing, Nature? Belvidera!

(*Enter* BELVIDERA.)

Poor Belvidera!
BELV. Lead me, lead me, my virgins!
To that kind voice. My lord, my love, my refuge!
Happy my eyes, when they behold thy face;
My heavy heart will leave its doleful beating
At sight of thee, and bound with sprightful joys.
O smile, as when our loves were in their spring,
And cheer my fainting soul.
JAFF. As when our loves
Were in their spring? has then my fortune changed?
Art thou not Belvidera, still the same,
Kind, good, and tender, as my arms first found thee?
If thou art altered, where shall I have harbor?
Where ease my loaded heart? Oh! where complain?
BELV. Does this appear like change, or love decaying,
When thus I throw myself into thy bosom,
With all the resolution of a strong truth?
Beats not my heart, as 'twould alarm thine
To a new charge of bliss? I joy more in thee,
Than did thy mother when she hugged thee first,
And blessed the gods for all her travail past.
JAFF. Can there in women be such glorious faith?
Sure all ill stories of thy sex are false!
O woman! lovely woman! Nature made thee
To temper man: we had been brutes without you.
Angels are painted fair, to look like you;
There's in you all that we believe of heav'n,
Amazing brightness, purity and truth,
Eternal joy, and everlasting love.
BELV. If love be treasure, we'll be wondrous rich;
I have so much, my heart will surely break with't;
Vows cannot express it; when I would declare
How great's my joy, I am dumb with the big thought;
I swell, and sigh, and labor with my longing.
Oh, lead me to some desert wide and wild,
Barren as our misfortunes, where my soul
May have its vent; where I may tell aloud
To the high heavens, and every list'ning planet,
With what a boundless stock my bosom's fraught;
Where I may throw my eager arms about thee,
Give loose to love with kisses, kindling joy,
And let off all the fire that's in my heart!
JAFF. O Belvidera! double I am a beggar,
Undone by fortune, and in debt to thee;
Want! worldly Want! that hungry meagre fiend
Is at my heels, and chases me in view!
Canst thou bear cold and hunger? Can these limbs,
Framed for the tender offices of love,

Endure the bitter gripes of smarting poverty?
When banished by our miseries abroad
(As suddenly we shall be), to seek out
(In some far climate where our names are strangers)
For charitable succor; wilt thou then,
When in a bed of straw we shrink together,
And the bleak winds shall whistle round our heads,
Wilt thou then talk thus to me? Wilt thou then
Hush my cares thus, and shelter me with love?
Belv. Oh, I will love thee, even in madness love thee.
Tho' my distracted senses should forsake me,
I'd find some intervals, when my poor heart
Should 'suage itself and be let loose to thine.
Though the bare earth be all our resting-place,
Its roots our food, some clift our habitation,
I'll make this arm a pillow for thy head;
As thou sighing li'st, and swelled with sorrow,
Creep to thy bosom, pour the balm of love
Into thy soul, and kiss thee to thy rest;
Then praise our God, and watch thee till the morning.
Jaff. Hear this, you heavens, and wonder how you made her!
Reign, reign, ye monarchs that divide the world,
Busy rebellion ne'er will let you know
Tranquillity and happiness like mine!
Like gaudy ships, th' obsequious billows fall
And rise again, to lift you in your pride;
They wait but for a storm and then devour you.
I, in my private bark, already wrecked,
Like a poor merchant driven on unknown land,
That had by chance packed up his choicest treasure
In one dear casket, and saved only that,

Since I must wander further on the shore,
Thus hug my little, but my precious store;
Resolved to scorn, and trust my fate no more. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT II

[Scene I]

(*Enter* Pierre *and* Aquilina.)

Aquil. By all thy wrongs, thou art dearer to my arms
Than all the wealth of Venice: prithee stay,
And let us love to-night.
Pierr. No; there's fool,
There's fool about thee. When a woman sells
Her flesh to fools, her beauty's lost to me;
They leave a taint, a sully where th'ave passed;
There's such a baneful quality about 'em,
E'en spoils complexions with their own nauseousness;
They infect all they touch; I cannot think
Of tasting anything a fool has palled.
Aquil. I loathe and scorn that fool thou mean'st, as much
Or more than thou canst; but the beast has gold
That makes him necessary; power too,
To qualify my character, and poise me
Equal with peevish virtue, that beholds
My liberty with envy. In their hearts
Are loose as I am; but an ugly power
Sits in their faces, and frights pleasures from 'em.
Pierr. Much good may't do you, madam, with your Senator.
Aquil. My Senator! why, canst thou think that wretch
E'er filled thy Aquilina's arms with pleasure?
Think'st thou, because I sometimes give him leave
To foil himself at what he is unfit for,
Because I force myself to endure and suffer him,
Think'st thou I love him? No, by all the joys

Thou ever gav'st me, his presence is my penance;
The worst thing an old man can be's a lover,
A mere *memento mori* to poor woman.
I never lay by his decrepit side,
But all that night I pondered on my grave.

Pierr. Would he were well sent thither!

Aquil. That's my wish too:
For then, my Pierre, I might have cause with pleasure
To play the hypocrite. Oh! how I could weep
Over the dying dotard, and kiss him too,
In hopes to smother him quite; then, when the time
Was come to pay my sorrows at his funeral,
For he has already made me heir to treasures,
Would make me out-act a real widow's whining;
How could I frame my face to fit my mourning,
With wringing hands attend him to his grave,
Fall swooning on his hearse; take mad possession
Even of the dismal vault, where he lay buried,
There like the Ephesian matron dwell, till thou,
My lovely soldier, comest to my deliverance;
Then throwing up my veil, with open arms
And laughing eyes, run to new dawning joy!

Pierr. No more! I have friends to meet me here to-night,
And must be private. As you prize my friendship,
Keep up your coxcomb; let him not pry nor listen,
Nor fisk about the house as I have seen him,
Like a tame mumping squirrel with a bell on;
Curs will be abroad to bite him, if you do.

Aquil. What friends to meet? may I not be of your council?

Pierr. How! a woman ask questions out of bed?
Go to your Senator, ask him what passes
Amongst his brethren, he'll hide nothing from you;
But pump not me for politics. No more!
Give order that whoever in my name
Comes here, receive admittance; so good-night.

Aquil. Must we ne'er meet again! Embrace no more!
Is love so soon and utterly forgotten!

Pierr. As you henceforward treat your fool, I'll think on't.

Aquil. Cursed be all fools, and doubly cursed myself,
The worst of fools — I die if he forsakes me;
And now to keep him, heav'n or hell instruct me. *(Exeunt.)*

Scene [II.] — *The Rialto*

(Enter Jaffeir.)

Jaff. I am here, and thus, the shades of night around me,
I look as if all hell were in my heart,
And I in hell. Nay, surely 'tis so with me; —
For every step I tread, methinks some fiend
Knocks at my breast, and bids it not be quiet.
I've heard how desperate wretches, like myself,
Have wandered out at this dead time of night
To meet the foe of mankind in his walk.
Sure I am so cursed, that, tho' of heav'n forsaken,
No minister of darkness cares to tempt me.
Hell! hell! why sleepest thou?

(Enter Pierre.)

Pierr. Sure I have stayed too long;
The clock has struck, and I may lose my proselyte.
Speak, who goes there?

Jaff. A dog, that comes to howl
At yonder moon. What's he that asks the question?

Pierr. A friend to dogs, for they are honest creatures,
And ne'er betray their masters; never fawn
On any that they love not. Well met, friend.
Jaffeir!
Jaff. The same. O Pierre! thou art come in season,
I was just going to pray.
Pierr. Ah, that's mechanic,
Priests make a trade on't, and yet starve by it too.
No praying, it spoils business, and time's precious.
Where's Belvidera?
Jaff. For a day or two
I've lodged her privately, till I see farther
What fortune will do with me. Prithee, friend,
If thou wouldst have me fit to hear good counsel,
Speak not of Belvidera ——
Pierr. Speak not of her?
Jaff. Oh no!
Pierr. Nor name her? May be I wish her well.
Jaff. Who well?
Pierr. Thy wife, thy lovely Belvidera.
I hope a man may wish his friend's wife well,
And no harm done!
Jaff. Y'are merry, Pierre!
Pierr. I am so.
Thou shalt smile too, and Belvidera smile;
We'll all rejoice; here's something to buy pins;
Marriage is chargeable.
Jaff. I but half wished
To see the devil, and he's here already.
Well!
What must this buy, rebellion, murder, treason?
Tell me which way I must be damned for this.
Pierr. When last we parted, we had no qualms like these,
But entertained each other's thoughts like men,
Whose souls were well acquainted. Is the world
Reformed since our last meeting? what new miracles
Have happened? has Priuli's heart relented?
Can he be honest?
Jaff. Kind heav'n! let heavy curses
Gall his old age; cramps, aches, rack his bones;
And bitterest disquiet wring his heart;
Oh, let him live till life become his burden!
Let him groan under't long, linger an age
In the worst agonies and pangs of death,
And find its ease, but late!
Pierr. Nay, couldst thou not
As well, my friend, have stretched the curse to all
The Senate round, as to one single villain?
Jaff. But curses stick not. Could I kill with cursing,
By heav'n, I know not thirty heads in Venice
Should not be blasted; senators should rot
Like dogs on dunghills; but their wives and daughters
Die of their own diseases! Oh, for a curse
To kill with!
Pierr. Daggers, daggers are much better!
Jaff. Ha!
Pierr. Daggers.
Jaff. But where are they?
Pierr. Oh, a thousand
May be disposed in honest hands in Venice.
Jaff. Thou talk'st in clouds.
Pierr. But yet a heart half wronged
As thine has been, would find the meaning, Jaffeir.
Jaff. A thousand daggers, all in honest hands;
And have not I a friend will stick one here?
Pierr. Yes, if I thought thou wert not to be cherished
To a nobler purpose, I'd be that friend.
But thou hast better friends, friends whom thy wrongs
Have made thy friends; friends worthy to be called so.

I'll trust thee with a secret: there are spirits
This hour at work. But as thou art a man
Whom I have picked and chosen from the world,
Swear, that thou wilt be true to what I utter,
And when I have told thee, that which only gods
And men like gods are privy to, then swear,
No chance or change shall wrest it from my bosom.
Jaff. When thou wouldst bind me, is there need of oaths?
(Greensickness girls lose maidenheads with such counters)
For thou art so near my heart, that thou mayst see
Its bottom, sound its strength, and firmness to thee.
Is coward, fool, or villain, in my face?
If I seem none of these, I dare believe
Thou wouldst not use me in a little cause,
For I am fit for honor's toughest task;
Nor ever yet found fooling was my province;
And for a villainous inglorious enterprise,
I know thy heart so well, I dare lay mine
Before thee, set it to what point thou wilt.
Pierr. Nay, it's a cause thou wilt be fond of, Jaffeir.
For it is founded on the noblest basis,
Our liberties, our natural inheritance;
There's no religion, no hypocrisy in't;
We'll do the business, and ne'er fast and pray for't;
Openly act a deed, the world shall gaze
With wonder at, and envy when it is done.
Jaff. For liberty!
Pierr. For liberty, my friend!
Thou shalt be freed from base Priuli's tyranny,
And thy sequestered fortunes healed again.
I shall be freed from opprobrious wrongs,
That press me now, and bend my spirit downward;
All Venice free, and every growing merit
Succeed to its just right; fools shall be pulled
From wisdom's seat; those baleful unclean birds,
Those lazy owls, who (perched near fortune's top)
Sit only watchful with their heavy wings
To cuff down new-fledged virtues, that would rise
To nobler heights, and make the grove harmonious.
Jaff. What can I do?
Pierr. Canst thou not kill a Senator?
Jaff. Were there one wise or honest, I could kill him
For herding with that nest of fools and knaves.
By all my wrongs, thou talk'st as if revenge
Were to be had, and the brave story warms me.
Pierr. Swear then!
Jaff. I do, by all those glittering stars,
And yond great ruling planet of the night!
By all good pow'rs above, and ill below!
By love and friendship, dearer than my life!
No pow'r or death shall make me false to thee.
Pierr. Here we embrace, and I'll unlock my heart.
A council's held hard by, where the destruction
Of this great Empire's hatching: there I'll lead thee!
But be a man, for thou art to mix with men
Fit to disturb the peace of all the world,
And rule it when it's wildest —
Jaff. I give thee thanks
For this kind warning. Yes, I will be a man,
And charge thee, Pierre, whene'er thou see'st my fears
Betray me less, to rip this heart of mine
Out of my breast, and show it for a coward's.
Come, let's begone, for from this hour I chase
All little thoughts, all tender human follies
Out of my bosom: vengeance shall have room.
Revenge!
Pierr. And liberty!
Jaff. Revenge! revenge —
(*Exeunt.*)

[SCENE III.] — *The Scene changes to* AQUILINA'S *house, the Greek Courtesan*

(*Enter* RENAULT.)

RENAULT. Why was my choice ambition the first ground
A wretch can build on? It's indeed at distance
A good prospect, tempting to the view,
The height delights us, and the mountain top
Looks beautiful, because it's nigh to heav'n,
But we ne'er think how sandy's the foundation,
What storm will batter, and what tempest shake us!
Who's there?

(*Enter* SPINOSA.)

SPIN. Renault, good morrow! for by this time
I think the scale of night has turned the balance,
And weighs up morning. Has the clock struck twelve?
REN. Yes, clocks will go as they are set. But man,
Irregular man's ne'er constant, never certain.
I've spent at least three precious hours of darkness
In waiting dull attendance; 'tis the curse
Of diligent virtue to be mixed like mine
With giddy tempers, souls but half resolved.
SPIN. Hell seize that soul amongst us it can frighten!
REN. What's then the cause that I am here alone?
Why are we not together?

(*Enter* ELIOT.)

O sir, welcome!
You are an Englishman: when treason's hatching
One might have thought you'd not have been behindhand.
In what whore's lap have you been lolling?
Give but an Englishman his whore and ease,
Beef and a sea-coal fire, he's yours for ever.
ELIOT. Frenchman, you are saucy.
REN. How!

(*Enter* BEDAMAR *the Ambassador*, THEODORE, BRAINVEIL, DURAND, BRABE, REVILLIDO, MEZZANA, TERNON, RETROSI, *Conspirators*.)

BEDA. At difference? — fie!
Is this a time for quarrels? Thieves and rogues
Fall out and brawl: should men of your high calling,
Men separated by the choice of Providence
From the gross heap of mankind, and set here
In this great assembly as in one great jewel,
T' adorn the bravest purpose it e'er smiled on,
Should you like boys wrangle for trifles?
REN. Boys!
BEDA. Renault, thy hand!
REN. I thought I'd given my heart
Long since to every man that mingles here;
But grieve to find it trusted with such tempers,
That can't forgive my froward age its weakness.
BEDA. Eliot, thou once hadst virtue; I have seen
Thy stubborn temper bend with godlike goodness,
Not half thus courted. 'Tis thy nation's glory,
To hug the foe that offers brave alliance.
Once more embrace, my friends — we'll all embrace —
United thus, we are the mighty engine
Must twist this rooted Empire from its basis!
Totters it not already?
ELIOT. Would it were tumbling!
BEDA. Nay, it shall down: this night we seal its ruin.

(*Enter* PIERRE.)

O Pierre! thou art welcome!
Come to my breast, for by its hopes thou look'st
Lovelily dreadful, and the fate of Venice
Seems on thy sword already. O my Mars!

The poets that first feigned a god of war
Sure prophesied of thee.
Pierr. Friends! was not Brutus
(I mean that Brutus who in open senate
Stabbed the first Cæsar that usurped the world)
A gallant man?
Ren. Yes, and Catiline too,
Tho' story wrong his fame; for he conspired
To prop the reeling glory of his country:
His cause was good.
Beda. And ours as much above it,
As, Renault, thou art superior to Cethegus,
Or Pierre to Cassius.
Pierr. Then to what we aim at. —
When do we start? or must we talk for ever?
Beda. No, Pierre, the deed's near birth. Fate seems to have set
The business up, and given it to our care.
I hope there's not a heart nor hand amongst us
But is firm and ready.
All. All! We'll die with Bedamar.
Beda. O men,
Matchless, as will your glory be hereafter!
The game is for a matchless prize, if won;
If lost, disgraceful ruin.
Ren. What can lose it?
The public stock's a beggar; one Venetian
Trusts not another. Look into their stores
Of general safety. Empty magazines,
A tattered fleet, a murmuring unpaid army,
Bankrupt nobility, a harassed commonalty,
A factious, giddy, and divided Senate,
Is all the strength of Venice. Let's destroy it;
Let's fill their magazines with arms to awe them,
Man out their fleet, and make their trade maintain it;
Let loose the murmuring army on their masters,
To pay themselves with plunder; lop their nobles
To the base roots, whence most of 'em first sprung;
Enslave the rout, whom smarting will make humble;
Turn out their droning Senate, and possess
That seat of empire which our souls were framed for.
Pierr. Ten thousand men are armed at your nod,
Commanded all by leaders fit to guide
A battle for the freedom of the world;
This wretched state has starved them in its service,
And by your bounty quickened, they're resolved
To serve your glory, and revenge their own!
Th' have all their different quarters in this city,
Watch for th' alarm, and grumble 'tis so tardy.
Beda. I doubt not, friend, but thy unwearied diligence
Has still kept waking, and it shall have ease.
After this night it is resolved we meet
No more, till Venice own us for her lords.
Pierr. How lovely the Adriatic whore,
Dressed in her flames, will shine! devouring flames!
Such as shall burn her to the watery bottom
And hiss in her foundation.
Beda. Now if any
Amongst us that owns this glorious cause
Have friends or interest he'd wish to save,
Let it be told, the general doom is sealed;
But I'd forego the hopes of a world's empire,
Rather than wound the bowels of my friend.
Pierr. I must confess you there have touched my weakness,
I have a friend; hear it, such a friend!
My heart was ne'er shut to him. Nay, I'll tell you,
He knows the very business of this hour;
But he rejoices in the cause, and loves it.
W' have changed a vow to live and die together,
And he's at hand to ratify it here.
Ren. How! all betrayed?
Pierr. No — I've dealt nobly with you;
I've brought my all into the public stock:

I had but one friend, and him I'll share amongst you!
Receive and cherish him; or if, when seen
And searched, you find him worthless, as my tongue
Has lodged this secret in his faithful breast,
To ease your fears I wear a dagger here
Shall rip it out again, and give you rest.
Come forth, thou only good I e'er could boast of.

(*Enter* JAFFEIR *with a Dagger.*)

BEDA. His presence bears the show of manly virtue.
JAFF. I know you'll wonder all, that thus uncalled,
I dare approach this place of fatal councils;
But I'm amongst you, and by heav'n it glads me,
To see so many virtues thus united,
To restore justice and dethrone oppression.
Command this sword, if you would have it quiet,
Into this breast; but if you think it worthy
To cut the throats of reverend rogues in robes,
Send me into the cursed assembled Senate;
It shrinks not, though I meet a father there.
Would you behold this city flaming? Here's
A hand shall bear a lighted torch at noon
To the arsenal, and set its gates on fire.
REN. You talk this well, sir.
JAFF. Nay — by heav'n I'll do this.
Come, come, I read distrust in all your faces;
You fear me a villain, and indeed it's odd
To hear a stranger talk thus at first meeting,
Of matters that have been so well debated;
But I come ripe with wrongs as you with counsels;
I hate this Senate, am a foe to Venice;
A friend to none but men resolved like me
To push on mischief. Oh, did you but know me,
I need not talk thus!
BEDA. Pierre! I must embrace him,
My heart beats to this man as if it knew him.
REN. I never loved these huggers.
JAFF. Still I see
The cause delights me not. Your friends survey me,
As I were dang'rous — but I come armed
Against all doubts, and to your trust will give
A pledge, worth more than all the world can pay for.
My Belvidera! Ho! my Belvidera!
BEDA. What wonder next?
JAFF. Let me entreat you,
As I have henceforth hopes to call ye friends,
That all but the ambassador, this
Grave guide of councils, with my friend that owns me,
Withdraw a while to spare a woman's blushes.
(*Ex. all but* BED., REN., JAFF., PIERR.)
BEDA. Pierre, whither will this ceremony lead us?
JAFF. My Belvidera! Belvidera!

(*Enter* BELVIDERA.)

BELV. Who?
Who calls so loud at this late peaceful hour?
That voice was wont to come in gentler whispers,
And fill my ears with the soft breath of love:
Thou hourly image of my thoughts, where art thou?
JAFF. Indeed 'tis late.
BELV. Oh! I have slept, and dreamt,
And dreamt again. Where hast thou been, thou loiterer?
Tho' my eyes closed, my arms have still been opened;
Stretched every way betwixt my broken slumbers,
To search if thou wert come to crown my rest.
There's no repose without thee. Oh, the day
Too soon will break, and wake us to our sorrow;
Come, come to bed, and bid thy cares good night.
JAFF. O Belvidera! we must change the scene

In which the past delights of life were tasted.
The poor sleep little; we must learn to watch
Our labors late, and early every morning,
Midst winter frosts, th[i]n clad and fed with sparing,
Rise to our toils, and drudge away the day.
Belv. Alas! where am I! whither is't you lead me!
Methinks I read distraction in your face,
Something less gentle than the fate you tell me!
You shake and tremble too! your blood runs cold!
Heavens guard my love, and bless his heart with patience!
Jaff. That I have patience, let our fate bear witness,
Who has ordained it so, that thou and I,
(Thou the divinest Good man e'er possessed,
And I the wretched'st of the race of man)
This very hour, without one tear, must part.
Belv. Part! must we part? Oh! am I then forsaken?
Will my love cast me off? have my misfortunes
Offended him so highly, that he'll leave me?
Why drag you from me? whither are you going?
My dear! my life! my love!
Jaff. O friends!
Belv. Speak to me.
Jaff. Take her from my heart;
She'll gain such hold else, I shall ne'er get loose.
I charge thee take her, but with tender'st care,
Relieve her troubles and assuage her sorrows.
Ren. Rise, madam! and command amongst your servants!
Jaff. To you, sirs, and your honors, I bequeath her,
And with her this; when I prove unworthy — (*Gives a dagger.*)
You know the rest — then strike it to her heart;
And tell her, he, who three whole happy years
Lay in her arms, and each kind night repeated
The passionate vows of still-increasing love,
Sent that reward for all her truth and sufferings.
Belv. Nay, take my life, since he has sold it cheaply;
Or send me to some distant clime your slave;
But let it be far off, lest my complainings
Should reach his guilty ears, and shake his peace.
Jaff. No, Belvidera, I've contrived thy honor.
Trust to my faith, and be but fortune kind
To me, as I'll preserve that faith unbroken,
When next we meet, I'll lift thee to a height,
Shall gather all the gazing world about thee,
To wonder what strange virtue placed thee there.
But if we ne'er meet more ——
Belv. O thou unkind one,
Never meet more! have I deserved this from you?
Look on me, tell me, tell me, speak, thou dear deceiver,
Why am I separated from thy love?
If I am false, accuse me; but if true,
Don't, prithee, don't in poverty forsake me,
But pity the sad heart, that's torn with parting!
Yet hear me! yet recall me ——
(*Ex.* Ren., Bed., *and* Belv.)
Jaff. O my eyes!
Look not that way, but turn yourselves awhile
Into my heart, and be weaned all together.
My friend, where art thou?
Pierr. Here, my honor's brother.
Jaff. Is Belvidera gone?
Pierr. Renault has led her
Back to her own apartment; but, by heav'n!
Thou must not see her more till our work's over.

Jaff. No.

Pierr. Not for your life.

Jaff. O Pierre, wert thou but she,
How I could pull thee down into my heart,
Gaze on thee till my eye-strings cracked with love,
Till all my sinews with its fire extended,
Fixed me upon the rack of ardent longing;
Then swelling, sighing, raging to be blest,
Come like a panting turtle to thy breast,
On thy soft bosom, hovering, bill and play,
Confess the cause why last I fled away;
Own 'twas a fault, but swear to give it o'er
And never follow false ambition more.
(*Ex. ambo.*)

ACT III

[Scene I]

(*Enter* Aquilina *and her Maid.*)

Aquil. Tell him I am gone to bed; tell him I am not at home; tell him I've better company with me, or anything; tell him, in short, I will not see him, the eternal, troublesome, vexatious fool. He's worse company than an ignorant physician. — I'll not be disturbed at these unseasonable hours.

Maid. But madam! He's here already, just entered the doors!

Aquil. Turn him out again, you unnecessary, useless, giddy-brained ass! If he will not begone, set the house afire and burn us both. I had rather meet a toad in my dish than that old hideous animal in my chamber to-night.

(*Enter* Antonio.)

Anto. Nacky, Nacky, Nacky — how dost do, Nacky? Hurry durry. I am come, little Nacky; past eleven o'clock, a late hour; time in all conscience to go to bed, Nacky — Nacky did I say? Ay Nacky; Aquilina, lina, lina, quilina, quilina, quilina, Aquilina, Naquilina, Naquilina, Acky, Acky, Nacky, Nacky, Queen Nacky — Come let's to bed — you fubbs, you pugg you — you little puss — purree tuzzey — I am a senator.

Aquil. You are a fool, I am sure.

Anto. May be so too, sweetheart. Never the worse senator for all that. Come Nacky, Nacky, let's have a game at rump, Nacky.

Aquil. You would do well, signor, to be troublesome here no longer, but leave me to myself; be sober and go home, sir.

Anto. Home, Madonna!

Aquil. Ay, home, sir. Who am I?

Anto. Madonna, as I take it you are my — you are — thou art my little Nicky Nacky . . . that's all!

Aquil. I find you are resolved to be troublesome, and so to make short of the matter in few words, I hate you, detest you, loathe you, I am weary of you, sick of you — hang you, you are an old, silly, impertinent, impotent, solicitous coxcomb, crazy in your head, and lazy in your body, love to be meddling with everything, and if you had not money, you are good for nothing.

Anto. "Good for nothing!" Hurry durry, I'll try that presently. Sixty-one years old, and good for nothing; that's brave. — (*To the maid.*) Come, come, come, Mistress Fiddle-faddle, turn you out for a season; go turn out, I say; it is our will and pleasure to be private some moments — out, out when you are bid to. — (*Puts her out and locks the door.*) "Good for nothing," you say.

Aquil. Why, what are you good for?

Anto. In the first place, madam, I am old, and consequently very wise, very wise, Madonna, d'e mark that? In the second place, take notice, if you please, that I am a senator, and when I think fit can make speeches, Madonna. Hurry durry, I can make a speech in the Senate-house now and then — would make your hair stand on end, Madonna.

Aquil. What care I for your speeches in the Senate-house! If you would be silent here, I should thank you.

Anto. Why, I can make speeches to thee too, my lovely Madonna; for example — my cruel fair one, (*takes out a purse of gold and at every pause shakes it*) since it is my fate, that you should with your servant angry prove; tho' late at night — I hope 'tis not too late with this to gain reception for my love — there's for thee, my little Nicky Nacky — take it, here take it — I say take it, or I'll throw it at your head — how now, rebel!

Aquil. Truly, my illustrious senator, I must confess your honor is at present most profoundly eloquent indeed.

Anto. Very well: come, now let's sit down and think upon't a little — come sit I say — sit down by me a little, my Nicky Nacky, ha. — (*Sits down.*) Hurry durry — "good for nothing" ——

Aquil. No, sir, if you please, I can know my distance and stand.

Anto. Stand? how? Nacky up and I down! Nay, then, let me exclaim with the poet,

Show me a case more pitiful who can,
A standing woman, and a falling man.

Hurry durry — not sit down — see this, ye gods. — You won't sit down?

Aquil. No, sir.

Anto. Then look you now, suppose me a bull, a *basan*-bull, the bull of bulls, or any bull. Thus up I get and with my brows thus bent — I broo, I say I broo, I broo, I broo. You won't sit down, will you? — I broo — (*Bellows like a bull, and drives her about.*)

Aquil. Well, sir, I must endure this. Now your (*she sits down*) honor has been a bull, pray what beast will your worship please to be next?

Anto. Now I'll be a senator again, and thy lover, little Nicky Nacky! (*He sits by her.*) Ah toad, toad, toad, toad! spit in my face a little, Nacky — spit in my face, prithee, spit in my face, never so little; spit but a little bit — spit, spit, spit, spit, when you are bid, I say; do, prithee, spit — now, now, now, spit; what, you won't spit, will you? Then I'll be a dog.

Aquil. A dog, my lord?

Anto. Ay, a dog — and I'll give thee this t'other purse to let me be a dog — and to use me like a dog a little. Hurry durry — I will — here 'tis.

(*Gives the purse.*)

Aquil. Well, with all my heart. But let me beseech your dogship to play your tricks over as fast as you can, that you may come to stinking the sooner, and be turned out of doors as you deserve.

Anto. Ay, ay — no matter for that — that — (*he gets under the table*) — shan't move me — Now, bow wow wow, bow wow — (*Barks like a dog.*)

Aquil. Hold, hold, hold, sir, I beseech you! what is't you do? If curs bite, they must be kicked, sir. Do you see, kicked thus.

Anto. Ay, with all my heart; do kick, kick on, now I am under the table, kick again — kick harder — harder yet, bow wow wow, wow, bow — 'od I'll have a snap at thy shins — bow wow wow, wow, bow — 'od she kicks bravely. ——

Aquil. Nay, then I'll go another way to work with you; and I think here's an instrument fit for the purpose. (*Fetches a whip and bell.*) What, bite your mistress, sirrah! out, out of doors, you dog, to kennel and be hanged — bite your mistress by the legs, you rogue ——

(*She whips him.*)

Anto. Nay, prithee, Nacky, now thou art too loving. Hurry durry, 'od, I'll be a dog no longer.

Aquil. Nay, none of your fawning and grinning; but be gone, or here's the discipline. What, bite your mistress by the legs, you mongrel? Out of doors — hout hout, to kennel, sirrah! go!

Anto. This is very barbarous usage, Nacky, very barbarous; look you, I will not go — I will not stir from the door, that I resolve — hurry durry, what, shut me out? (*She whips him out.*)

Aquil. Ay, and if you come here any more to-night I'll have my footmen lug you, you cur. What, bite your poor mistress Nacky, sirrah!

(*Enter Maid.*)

Maid. Heav'ns, madam! What's the matter?

(*He howls at the door like a dog.*)

Aquil. Call my footmen hither presently.

(*Enter two Footmen.*)

Maid. They are here already,

madam, the house is all alarmed with a strange noise, that nobody knows what to make of.

Aquil. Go all of you and turn that troublesome beast in the next room out of my house. — If I ever see him within these walls again, without my leave for his admittance, you sneaking rogues, — I'll have you poisoned all, poisoned, like rats; every corner of the house shall stink of one of you. Go, and learn hereafter to know my pleasure. So now for my Pierre:

Thus when godlike lover was displeased,
We sacrifice our fool and he's appeased.

(*Exeunt.*)

Scene II.

(*Enter* Belvidera.)

Belv. I'm sacrificed! I am sold! betrayed to shame!
Inevitable ruin has enclosed me!
No sooner was I to my bed repaired
To weigh, and (weeping) ponder my condition,
But the old hoary wretch, to whose false care
My peace and honor was entrusted, came
(Like Tarquin) ghastly with infernal lust.
O thou Roman Lucrece! thou couldst find friends to vindicate thy wrong;
I never had but one, and he's proved false;
He that should guard my virtue, has betrayed it;
Left me! undone me! Oh, that I could hate him!
Where shall I go! Oh, whither whither wander?

(*Enter* Jaffeir.)

Jaff. Can Belvidera want a resting place
When these poor arms are open to receive her?
Oh, 'tis in vain to struggle with desires
Strong as my love to thee; for every moment
I'm from thy sight, the heart within my bosom
Moans like a tender infant in its cradle
Whose nurse had left it. Come, and with the songs
Of gentle love persuade it to its peace.

Belv. I fear the stubborn wanderer will not own me,
'Tis grown a rebel to be ruled no longer,
Scorns the indulgent bosom that first lulled it,
And like a disobedient child disdains
The soft authority of Belvidera.

Jaff. There was a time ——

Belv. Yes, yes, there was a time
When Belvidera's tears, her cries, and sorrows,
Were not despised; when if she chanced to sigh,
Or look but sad — there was indeed a time
When Jaffeir would have ta'en her in his arms,
Eased her declining head upon his breast,
And never left her till he found the cause.
But let her now weep seas,
Cry, till she rend the earth; sigh till she burst
Her heart asunder; still he bears it all,
Deaf as the wind, and as the rocks unshaken.

Jaff. Have I been deaf? am I that rock unmoved,
Against whose root tears beat and sighs are sent?
In vain have I beheld thy sorrows calmly!
Witness against me, heav'ns, have I done this?
Then bear me in a whirlwind back again,
And let that angry dear one ne'er forgive me!
Oh, thou too rashly censur'st of my love!
Couldst thou but think how I have spent this night,
Dark and alone, no pillow to my head,
Rest in my eyes, nor quiet in my heart,
Thou wouldst not, Belvidera, sure thou wouldst not
Talk to me thus, but like a pitying angel
Spreading thy wings come settle on my breast,
And hatch warm comfort there ere sorrows freeze it.

Belv. Why, then, poor mourner, in what baleful corner

Hast thou been talking with that witch, the Night?
On what cold stone hast thou been stretched along,
Gathering the grumbling winds about thy head,
To mix with theirs the accents of thy woes!
Oh, now I find the cause my love forsakes me!
I am no longer fit to bear a share
In his concernments. My weak female virtue
Must not be trusted; 'tis too frail and tender.
Jaff. O Portia! Portia! what a soul was thine!
Belv. That Portia was a woman, and when Brutus,
Big with the fate of Rome (Heav'n guard thy safety!)
Concealed from her the labors of his mind,
She let him see her blood was great as his,
Flowed from a spring as noble, and a heart
Fit to partake his troubles, as his love.
Fetch, fetch that dagger back, the dreadful dower
Thou gav'st last night in parting with me; strike it
Here to my heart; and as the blood flows from it,
Judge if it run not pure as Cato's daughter's.
Jaff. Thou art too good, and I indeed unworthy,
Unworthy so much virtue. Teach me how
I may deserve such matchless love as thine,
And see with what attention I'll obey thee.
Belv. Do not despise me: that's the all I ask.
Jaff. Despise thee! Hear me ——
Belv. Oh, thy charming tongue
Is but too well acquainted with my weakness,
Knows, let it name but love, my melting heart
Dissolves within my breast; till with closed eyes
I reel into thy arms, and all's forgotten.
Jaff. What shall I do?
Belv. Tell me! be just, and tell me
Why dwells that busy cloud upon thy face?
Why am I made a stranger? why that sigh,
And I not know the cause? Why, when the world
Is wrapt in rest, why chooses then my love
To wander up and down in horrid darkness,
Loathing his bed, and these desiring arms?
Why are these eyes bloodshot with tedious watching?
Why starts he now? and looks as if he wished
His fate were finished? Tell me, ease my fears;
Lest when we next time meet, I want the power
To search into the sickness of thy mind,
But talk as wildly then as thou look'st now.
Jaff. O Belvidera!
Belv. Why was I last night delivered to a villain?
Jaff. Ha, a villain!
Belv. Yes! to a villain! Why at such an hour
Meets that assembly all made up of wretches
That look as hell had drawn 'em into league?
Why, I in this hand, and in that a dagger,
Was I delivered with such dreadful ceremonies?
"To you, sirs, and to your honor I bequeath her,
And with her this; whene'er I prove unworthy,
You know the rest, then strike it to her heart"?
Oh! why's that *rest* concealed from me? Must I
Be made the hostage of a hellish trust?
For such I know I am; that's all my value!
But by the love and loyalty I owe thee,
I'll free thee from the bondage of these slaves;
Straight to the Senate, tell 'em all I know,
All that I think, all that my fears inform me!

Jaff. Is this the Roman virtue! this the blood
That boasts its purity with Cato's daughter!
Would she have e'er betrayed her Brutus?
Belv. No,
For Brutus trusted her: wert thou so kind,
What would not Belvidera suffer for thee?
Jaff. I shall undo myself, and tell thee all.
Belv. Look not upon me, as I am a woman,
But as a bone, thy wife, thy friend, who long
Has had admission to thy heart, and there
Studied the virtues of thy gallant nature.
Thy constancy, thy courage and thy truth,
Have been my daily lesson. I have learnt them,
Am bold as thou, can suffer or despise
The worst of fates for thee, and with thee share them.
Jaff. Oh, you divinest Powers! look down and hear
My prayers! instruct me to reward this virtue!
Yet think a little ere thou tempt me further;
Think I have a tale to tell, will shake thy nature,
Melt all this boasted constancy thou talk'st of
Into vile tears and despicable sorrows.
Then if thou shouldst betray me!
Belv. Shall I swear?
Jaff. No, do not swear. I would not violate
Thy tender nature with so rude a bond;
But as thou hop'st to see me live my days,
And love thee long, lock this within thy breast:
I've bound myself by all the strictest sacraments,
Divine and human ——
Belv. Speak! —
Jaff. To kill thy father ——
Belv. My father!
Jaff. Nay, the throats of the whole Senate
Shall bleed, my Belvidera: he amongst us
That spares his father, brother, or his friend,
Is damned. How rich and beauteous will the face
Of Ruin look, when these wide streets run blood;
I and the glorious partners of my fortune
Shouting, and striding o'er the prostrate dead,
Still to new waste; whilst thou, far off in safety
Smiling, shalt see the wonders of our daring;
And when night comes, with praise and love receive me.
Belv. Oh!
Jaff. Have a care, and shrink not even in thought!
For if thou dost ——
Belv. I know it, thou wilt kill me.
Do, strike thy sword into this bosom: lay me
Dead on the earth, and then thou wilt be safe.
Murder my father! tho' his cruel nature
Has persecuted me to my undoing,
Driven me to basest wants, can I behold him
With smiles of vengeance, butchered in his age?
The sacred fountain of my life destroyed?
And canst thou shed the blood that gave me being?
Nay, be a traitor too, and sell thy country?
Can thy great heart descend so vilely low,
Mix with hired slaves, bravos, and common stabbers,
Nose-slitters, alley-lurking villains? join
With such a crew, and take a ruffian's wages,
To cut the throats of wretches as they sleep?
Jaff. Thou wrong'st me, Belvidera! I've engaged
With men of souls, fit to reform the ills
Of all mankind: there's not a heart amongst them,
But's as stout as death, yet honest as the nature

Of man first made, ere fraud and vice were fashions.
Belv. What's he, to whose cursed hands last night thou gav'st me?
Was that well done? Oh! I could tell a story
Would rouse thy lion-heart out of its den
And make it rage with terrifying fury.
Jaff. Speak on, I charge thee!
Belv. O my love! if e'er
Thy Belvidera's peace deserved thy care,
Remove me from this place! Last night, last night! ——
Jaff. Distract me not, but give me all the truth.
Belv. No sooner wert thou gone, and I alone,
Left in the pow'r of that old son of mischief,
No sooner was I lain on my sad bed,
But that vile wretch approached me, loose, unbuttoned,
Ready for violation. Then my heart
Throbb'd with its fears; oh, how I wept and sighed
And shrunk and trembled; wished in vain for him
That should protect me. Thou, alas! wert gone!
Jaff. Patience, sweet heav'n, till I make vengeance sure!
Belv. He drew the hideous dagger forth thou gav'st him,
And with upbraiding smiles he said, "Behold it;
This is the pledge of a false husband's love."
And in my arms then pressed, and would have clasped me;
But with my cries I scared his coward heart,
Till he withdrew, and muttered vows to hell.
These are thy friends! with these thy life, thy honor,
Thy love, all's staked, and all will go to ruin.
Jaff. No more. I charge thee keep this secret close;
Clear up thy sorrows, look as if thy wrongs
Were all forgot, and treat him like a friend,
As no complaint were made. No more, retire;
Retire, my life, and doubt not of my honor;
I'll heal its failings and deserve thy love.
Belv. Oh, should I part with thee, I fear thou wilt
In anger leave me, and return no more.
Jaff. Return no more! I would not live without thee
Another night to purchase the creation.
Belv. When shall we meet again?
Jaff. Anon at twelve!
I'll steal myself to thy expecting arms,
Come like a travelled dove and bring thee peace.
Belv. Indeed!
Jaff. By all our loves!
Belv. 'Tis hard to part;
But sure no falsehood ever looked so fairly.
Farewell — remember twelve.
(*Ex.* Belvid.)
Jaff. Let heav'n forget me.
When I remember not thy truth, thy love.
How cursed is my condition, tossed and justled,
From every corner; Fortune's common fool,
The jest of rogues, an instrumental ass
For villains to lay loads of shame upon,
And drive about just for their ease and scorn!

(*Enter* Pierre.)

Pierr. Jaffeir!
Jaff. Who calls!
Pierr. A friend, that could have wished
T' have found thee otherwise employed. What, hunt
A wife on the dull [s]oil! Sure a staunch husband
Of all hounds is the dullest! Wilt thou never,
Never be weaned from caudles and confections?
What feminine tale hast thou been listening to,
Of unaired shirts, catarrhs and toothache got
By thin-soled shoes? Damnation! that a fellow

Chosen to be a sharer in the destruction
Of a whole people, should sneak thus in corners
To ease his fulsome lusts, and fool his mind.
Jaff. May not a man then trifle out an hour
With a kind woman and not wrong his calling?
Pierr. Not in a cause like ours.
Jaff. Then, friend, our cause
Is in a damned condition; for I'll tell thee,
That canker-worm called Lechery has touched it.
'Tis tainted vilely. Wouldst thou think it, Renault
(That mortified old withered winter rogue)
Loves simple fornication like a priest.
I found him out for watering at my wife.
He visited her last night like a kind guardian.
Faith, she has some temptations, that's the truth on't.
Pierr. He durst not wrong his trust!
Jaff. 'Twas something late, though,
To take the freedom of a lady's chamber.
Pierr. Was she in bed?
Jaff. Yes, faith, in virgin sheets
White as her bosom, Pierre, dished neatly up,
Might tempt a weaker appetite to taste.
Oh, how the old fox stunk, I warrant thee,
When the rank fit was on him!
Pierr. Patience guide me!
He used no violence?
Jaff. No, no! out on't, violence!
Played with her neck, brushed her with his grey-beard,
Struggled and towzed, tickled her till she squeaked a little,
May be, or so — but not a jot of violence ——
Pierr. Damn him!
Jaff. Ay, so say I; but hush, no more on't.
All hitherto is well, and I believe
Myself no monster yet, though no man knows
What fate he's born to. Sure 'tis near the hour
We all should meet for our concluding orders.
Will the ambassador be here in person?
Pierr. No; he has sent commission to that villain, Renault,
To give the executing charge.
I'd have thee be a man, if possible,
And keep thy temper; for a brave revenge
Ne'er comes too late.
Jaff. Fear not, I'm cool as patience.
Had he completed my dishonor, rather
Than hazard the success our hopes are ripe for,
I'd bear it all with mortifying virtue.
Pierr. He's yonder coming this way through the hall;
His thoughts seem full.
Jaff. Prithee retire, and leave me
With him alone. I'll put him to some trial,
See how his rotten part will bear the touching.
Pierr. Be careful then. (*Ex.* Pierre.)
Jaff. Nay, never doubt, but trust me.
What, be a devil! take a damning oath
For shedding native blood! can there be a sin
In merciful repentance? Oh, this villain!

(*Enter* Renault.)

Ren. Perverse! and peevish! what a slave is man!
To let his itching flesh thus get the better of him!
Dispatch the tool her husband — that were well.
Who's there?
Jaff. A man.
Ren. My friend, my near ally!
The hostage of your faith, my beauteous charge, is very well.
Jaff. Sir, are you sure of that?
Stands she in perfect health? beats her pulse even?
Neither too hot nor cold?
Ren. What means that question?
Jaff. Oh, women have fantastic constitutions,
Inconstant as their wishes, always wavering,

And ne'er fixed. Was it not boldly done
Even at first sight to trust the thing I loved
(A tempting treasure too!) with youth so fierce
And vigorous as thine? But thou art honest.
Ren. Who dares accuse me?
Jaff. Cursed be him that doubts
Thy virtue! I have tried it, and declare,
Were I to choose a guardian of my honor,
I'd put it into thy keeping; for I know thee.
Ren. Know me!
Jaff. Ay, know thee: there's no falsehood in thee.
Thou lookst just as thou art. Let us embrace.
Now wouldst thou cut my throat or I cut thine?
Ren. You dare not do't.
Jaff. You lie, sir.
Ren. How!
Jaff. No more.
'Tis a base world, and must reform, that's all.

(*Enter* Spinosa, Theodore, Eliot, Revillido, Durand, Brainveil, *and the rest of the Conspirators.*)

Ren. Spinosa! Theodore!
Spin. The same.
Ren. You are welcome!
Spin. You are trembling, sir.
Ren. 'Tis a cold night indeed, I am aged,
Full of decay and natural infirmities.

(Pierre *re-enters.*)

We shall be warm, my friend, I hope, to-morrow.
Pierr. [*aside*]. 'Twas not well done, thou shouldst have stroked him
And not have galled him.
Jaff. [*aside*]. Damn him, let him chew on't.
Heav'n! where am I? beset with cursed fiends,
That wait to damn me. What a devil's man,
When he forgets his nature — hush, my heart.
Ren. My friends, 'tis late; are we assembled all?
Where's Theodore?
Theo. At hand.
Ren. Spinosa.
Spin. Here.
Ren. Brainveil.
Brain. I am ready.
Ren. Durand and Brabe.
Dur. Command us,
We are both prepared!
Ren. Mezzana, Revillido,
Ternon, Retrosi; oh, you are men, I find,
Fit to behold your fate, and meet her summons.
To-morrow's rising sun must see you all
Decked in your honors! are the soldiers ready?
Omn. All, all.
Ren. You, Durand, with your thousand must possess
St. Mark's; you, captain, know your charge already;
'Tis to secure the ducal palace; you,
Brabe, with a hundred more must gain the Secque;
With the like number Brainveil to the Procuralle.
Be all this done with the least tumult possible,
Till in each place you post sufficient guards.
Then sheathe your swords in every breast you meet.
Jaff. [*aside*]. O reverend cruelty! damned bloody villain!
Ren. During this execution, Durand, you
Must in the midst keep your battalia fast,
And, Theodore, be sure to plant the cannon
That may command the streets; whilst Revillido,
Mezzana, Ternon, and Retrosi, guard you.
This done, we'll give the general alarm,
Apply petards, and force the ars'nal gates;
Then fire the city round in several places,
Or with our cannon (if it dare resist)
Batter't to ruin. But above all I charge you
Shed blood enough, spare neither sex nor age,
Name nor condition; if there live a senator

After to-morrow, tho' the dullest rogue
That e'er said nothing, we have lost our ends;
If possible, let's kill the very name
Of senator, and bury it in blood.
Jaff. [*aside*]. Merciless, horrid slave! — Ay, blood enough!
Shed blood enough, old Renault: how thou charm'st me!
Ren. But one thing more, and then farewell till fate
Join us again, or separate us ever.
First, let's embrace, heav'n knows who next shall thus
Wing ye together. But let's all remember
We wear no common cause upon our swords;
Let each man think that on his single virtue
Depends the good and fame of all the rest,
Eternal honor or perpetual infamy.
Let's remember through what dreadful hazards
Propitious Fortune hitherto has led us,
How often on the brink of some discovery
Have we stood tottering, and yet still kept our ground
So well, the busiest searchers ne'er could follow
Those subtle tracks which puzzled all suspicion. —
You droop, sir.
Jaff. No; with a most profound attention
I've h[e]ard it all, and wonder at thy virtue.
Ren. Though there be yet few hours 'twixt them and ruin,
Are not the Senate lulled in full security,
Quiet and satisfied, as fools are always!
Never did so profound repose forerun
Calamity so great. Nay, our good fortune
Has blinded the most piercing of mankind,
Strengthened the fearful'st, charm'd the most suspectful,
Confounded the most subtle; for we live,
We live, my friends, and quickly shall our life
Prove fatal to these tyrants. Let's consider
That we destroy oppression, avarice,
A people nursed up equally with vices
And loathsome lusts, which Nature most abhors,
And such as without shame she cannot suffer.
Jaff. [*aside*]. O Belvidera, take me to thy arms
And show me where's my peace, for I've lost it. (*Ex.* Jaff.)
Ren. Without the least remorse then let's resolve
With fire and sword t' exterminate these tyrants,
And when we shall behold those cursed tribunals,
Stained by the tears and sufferings of the innocent,
Burning with flames rather from heav'n than ours,
The raging furious and unpitying soldier
Pulling his reeking dagger from the bosoms
Of gasping wretches; death in every quarter,
With all that sad disorder can produce,
To make a spectacle of horror, then,
Then let's call to mind, my dearest friends,
That there's nothing pure upon the earth;
That the most valued things have most allays;
And that in change of all those vile enormities,
Under whose weight this wretched country labors,
The means are only in our hands to crown them.
Pierr. And may those Powers above that are propitious
To gallant minds record this cause, and bless it.
Ren. Thus happy, thus secure of all we wish for,
Should there, my friends, be found amongst us one
False to this glorious enterprise, what fate,
What vengeance were enough for such a villain?
Eliot. Death here without repentance, hell hereafter.
Ren. Let that be my lot, if as here I stand
Listed by fate amongst her darling sons,
Tho' I had one only brother, dear by all
The strictest ties of nature; tho' one hour
Had given us birth, one fortune fed our wants.

One only love, and that but of each other,
Still filled our minds: could I have such a friend
Joined in this cause, and had but ground to fear
Meant foul play; may this right hand drop from me,
If I'd not hazard all my future peace,
And stab him to the heart before you: who
Would not do less? Wouldst not thou, Pierre, the same?

Pierr. You have singled me, sir, out for this hard question,
As if 'twere started only for my sake!
Am I the thing you fear? Here, here's my bosom,
Search it with all your swords! am I a traitor?

Ren. No; but I fear your late commended friend
Is little less. Come, sirs, 'tis now no time
To trifle with our safety. Where's this Jaffeir?

Spin. He left the room just now in strange disorder.

Ren. Nay, there is danger in him. I observed him,
During the time I took for explanation;
He was transported from most deep attention
To a confusion which he could not smother.
His looks grew full of sadness and surprise,
All which betrayed a wavering spirit in him,
That labored with reluctancy and sorrow.
What's requisite for safety must be done
With speedy execution: he remains
Yet in our power: I for my own part wear
A dagger.

Pierr. Well.

Ren. And I could wish it! —

Pierr. Where?

Ren. Buried in his heart.

Pierr. Away! w'are yet all friends;
No more of this, 'twill breed ill blood amongst us.

Spin. Let us all draw our swords, and search the house,
Pull him from the dark hole where he sits brooding
O'er his cold fears, and each man kill his share of him.

Pierr. Who talks of killing? who's he'll shed the blood
That's dear to me! is't you? or you? or you, sir?
What, not one speak? how you stand gaping all
On your grave oracle, your wooden god there;
Yet not a word. (*To* Renault.) Then, sir, I'll tell you a secret,
Suspicion's but at best a coward's virtue!

Ren. A coward —— (*Handles his sword.*)

Pierr. Put, put up thy sword, old man;
Thy hand shakes at it; come, let's heal this breach,
I am too hot; we yet may live as friends.

Spin. Till we are safe, our friendship cannot be so.

Pierr. Again: who's that?

Spin. 'Twas I.

Theo. And I.

Revill. And I.

Eliot. And all.

Ren. Who are on my side?

Spin. Every honest sword.
Let's die like men and not be sold like slaves.

Pierr. One such word more, by heav'n, I'll to the Senate
And hang ye all, like dogs in clusters!
Why peep your coward swords half out their shells?
Why do you not all brandish them like mine?
You fear to die, and yet dare talk of killing?

Ren. Go to thy Senate and betray us, hasten,
Secure thy wretched life; we fear to die
Less than thou dar'st be honest.

Pierr. That's rank falsehood!
Fear'st not thou death? fie, there's a knavish itch
In that salt blood, an utter foe to smarting.
Had Jaffeir's wife proved kind, he had still been true.
Foh — how that stinks!
Thou die! thou kill my friend! or thou, or thou,

Or thou, with that lean, withered, wretched face!
Away! disperse all to your several charges,
And meet to-morrow where your honor calls you.
I'll bring that man, whose blood you so much thirst for,
And you shall see him venture for you fairly. —
Hence, hence, I say.
(*Ex.* RENAULT *angrily.*)

SPIN. I fear we have been to blame,
And done too much.

THEO. 'Twas too far urged against the man you loved.

REVILL. Here, take our swords and crush 'em with your feet.

SPIN. Forgive us, gallant friend.

PIERR. Nay, now y' have found
The way to melt and cast me as you will.
I'll fetch this friend and give him to your mercy.
Nay, he shall die if you will take him from me;
For your repose I'll quit my heart's jewel;
But would not have him torn away by villains
And spiteful villainy.

SPIN. No; may you both
For ever live and fill the world with fame!

PIERR. Now you are too kind. Whence rose all this discord?
Oh, what a dangerous precipice have we scaped!
How near a fall was all we had long been building!
What an eternal blot had stained our glories,
If one, the bravest and the best of men,
Had fallen a sacrifice to rash suspicion,
Butchered by those whose cause he came to cherish!
Oh, could you know him all as I have known him,
How good he is, how just, how true, how brave,
You would not leave this place till you had seen him,
Humbled yourselves before him, kissed his feet,
And gained remission for the worst of follies.
Come but to-morrow all your doubts shall end,
And to your loves me better recommend,
That I've preserved your fame, and saved my friend.
(*Exeunt omnes.*)

ACT IV

[SCENE I]

(*Enter* JAFFEIR *and* BELVIDERA.)

JAFF. Where dost thou lead me? Every step I move,
Methinks I tread upon some mangled limb
Of a rack'd friend. Oh, my dear charming ruin!
Where are we wand'ring?

BELV. To eternal honor;
To do a deed shall chronicle thy name,
Among the glorious legends of those few
That have saved sinking nations; thy renown
Shall be the future song of all the virgins,
Who by thy piety have been preserved
From horrid violation; every street
Shall be adorned with statues to thy honor,
And at thy feet this great inscription written,
Remember him that propped the fall of Venice.

JAFF. Rather, remember him, who after all
The sacred bonds of oaths and holier friendship,
In fond compassion to a woman's tears,
Forgot his manhood, virtue, truth, and honor,
To sacrifice the bosom that relieved him.
Why wilt thou damn me?

BELV. O inconstant man!
How will you promise? how will you deceive?
Do, return back, replace me in my bondage,
Tell all thy friends how dangerously thou lov'st me;
And let thy dagger do its bloody office.
Oh, that kind dagger, Jaffeir, how 'twill look
Stuck through my heart, drenched in my blood to th' hilts!

Whilst these poor dying eyes shall with their tears
No more torment thee, then thou wilt be free.
Or if thou think'st it nobler, let me live
Till I am a victim to the hateful lust
Of that infernal devil, that old fiend
That's damned himself and would undo mankind.
Last night, my love! ——
Jaff. Name, name it not again.
It shows a beastly image to my fancy;
Will wake me into madness. Oh, the villain!
That durst approach such purity as thine
On terms so vile. Destruction, swift destruction,
Fall on my coward-head, and make my name
The common scorn of fools if I forgive him!
If I forgive him, — if I not revenge
With utmost rage, and most unstaying fury,
Thy sufferings, thou dear darling of my life, love!
Belv. Delay no longer then, but to the Senate;
And tell the dismal'st story e'er was uttered;
Tell 'em what bloodshed, rapines, desolations,
Have been prepared, how near's the fatal hour!
Save thy poor country, save the reverend blood
Of all its nobles, which to-morrow's dawn
Must else see shed. Save the poor tender lives
Of all those little infants which the swords
Of murtherers are whetting for this moment:
Think thou already hearst their dying screams;
Think that thou seest their sad, distracted mothers
Kneeling before thy feet, and begging pity
With torn dishevelled hair and streaming eyes,
Their naked, mangled breasts besmeared with blood,
And even the milk with which their fondled babes
Softly they hushed, dropping in anguish from 'em.
Think thou seest this, and then consult thy heart.
Jaff. Oh!
Belv. Think too, if thou lose this present minute,
What miseries the next day bring upon thee.
Imagine all the horrors of that night,
Murder and rapine, waste and desolation,
Confusedly ranging. Think what then may prove
My lot! The ravisher may then come safe,
And midst the terror of the public ruin
Do a damned deed, perhaps to lay a train
May catch thy life. Then where will be revenge,
The dear revenge that's due to such a wrong?
Jaff. By all heaven's powers, prophetic truth dwells in thee,
For every word thou speak'st strikes through my heart
Like a new light, and shows it how't has wandered.
Just what th'hast made me, take me, Belvidera,
And lead me to the place where I'm to say
This bitter lesson, where I must betray
My truth, my virtue, constancy, and friends.
Must I betray my friends? Ah, take me quickly,
Secure me well before that thought's renewed;
If I relapse once more, all's lost for ever.
Belv. Hast thou a friend more dear than Belvidera?
Jaff. No, th'art my soul itself; wealth, friendship, honor,
All present joys, and earnest of all future,
Are summed in thee. Methinks when in thy arms
Thus leaning on thy breast, one minute's more
Than a long thousand years of vulgar hours.

Why was such happiness not given me pure?
Why dashed with cruel wrongs, and bitter wantings?
Come, lead me forward now like a tame lamb
To sacrifice; thus in his fatal garlands,
Decked fine and pleased, the wanton skips and plays,
Trots by the enticing flattering priestess' side,
And much transported with his little pride,
Forgets his dear companions of the plain
Till by her, bound, he's on the altar lain,
Yet then too hardly bleats, such pleasure's in the pain.

(*Enter Officer and six Guards.*)

OFFIC. Stand; who goes there?
BELV. Friends.
JAFF. Friends, Belvidera! hide me from my friends.
By heaven, I'd rather see the face of hell,
Than meet the man I love.
OFFIC. But what friends are you?
BELV. Friends to the Senate and the State of Venice.
OFFIC. My orders are to seize on all I find
At this late hour, and bring 'em to the Council,
Who now are sitting.
JAFF. Sir, you shall be obeyed.
Hold, brutes, stand off, none of your paws upon me.
Now the lot's cast, and Fate, do what thou wilt! (*Exeunt guarded.*)

SCENE [II] — *The Senate-house*

(*Where appear sitting, the* DUKE OF VENICE, PRIULI, ANTONIO, *and eight other Senators.*)

DUKE. Antony, Priuli, senators of Venice,
Speak; why are we assembled here this night?
What have you to inform us of, concerns
The State of Venice' honor, or its safety?
PRIU. Could words express the story I have to tell you,
Fathers, these tears were useless, these sad tears
That fall from my old eyes; but there is cause
We all should weep, tear off these purple robes,
And wrap ourselves in sackcloth, sitting down
On the sad earth, and cry aloud to heaven.
Heaven knows if yet there be an hour to come
Ere Venice be no more!
ALL SENATORS. How!
PRIU. Nay, we stand
Upon the very brink of gaping ruin.
Within this city's formed a dark conspiracy,
To massacre us all, our wives and children,
Kindred and friends, our palaces and temples
To lay in ashes; nay, the hour too, fix'd;
The swords, for aught I know, drawn even this moment,
And the wild waste begun. From unknown hands
I had this warning. But if we are men
Let's not be tamely butchered, but do something
That may inform the world in after ages,
Our virtue was not ruined though we were.
(*A noise without.*) Room, room, make room for some prisoners——
2 SENATOR. Let's raise the city!

(*Enter Officer and Guard.*)

PRIU. Speak there, what disturbance?
OFFIC. Two prisoners have the guard seized in the streets,
Who say they come to inform this reverend Senate
About the present danger.

(*Enter* JAFFEIR *and* BELVIDERA *guarded.*)

ALL. Give 'em entrance——
Well, who are you?
JAFF. A villain.
ANTO. Short and pithy.
The man speaks well.
JAFF. Would every man that hears me
Would deal so honestly, and own his title.

Duke. 'Tis rumoured that a plot has been contriv'd
Against this State; that you have a share in't too.
If you are a villain, to redeem your honor,
Unfold the truth and be restored with mercy.
Jaff. Think not that I to save my life come hither, —
I know its value better; but in pity
To all those wretches whose unhappy dooms
Are fixed and sealed. You see me here before you,
The sworn and covenanted foe of Venice;
But use me as my dealings may deserve
And I may prove a friend.
Duke. The slave capitulates;
Give him the tortures.
Jaff. That you dare not do,
Your fears won't let you, nor the longing itch
To hear a story which you dread the truth of,
Truth [which] the fear of smart shall ne'er get from me.
Cowards are scared with threat'nings; boys are whipped
Into confessions; but a steady mind
Acts of itself, ne'er asks the body counsel.
"Give him the tortures!" Name but such a thing
Again, by heaven I'll shut these lips for ever,
Not all your racks, your engines, or your wheels
Shall force a groan away — that you may guess at.
Anto. A bloody-minded fellow, I'll warrant;
A damned bloody-minded fellow.
Duke. Name your conditions.
Jaff. For myself full pardon,
Besides the lives of two and twenty friends
(*Delivers a list.*)
Whose names are here enrolled. Nay, let their crimes
Be ne'er so monstrous, I must have the oaths
And sacred promise of this reverend Council,
That in a full assembly of the Senate
The thing I ask be ratified. Swear this,
And I'll unfold the secrets of your danger.
All. We'll swear.
Duke. Propose the oath.
Jaff. By all the hopes
Ye have of peace and happiness hereafter,
Swear.
All. We all swear.
Jaff. To grant me what I've asked,
Ye swear.
All. We swear.
Jaff. And as ye keep the oath,
May you and your posterity be blessed
Or cursed for ever.
All. Else be cursed for ever.

Jaff. Then here's the list, and with't the full disclose of all that threatens you. (*Delivers another paper.*)
Now, Fate, thou hast caught me.

Anto. Why, what a dreadful catalogue of cut-throats is here! I'll warrant you not one of these fellows but has a face like a lion. I dare not so much as read their names over.

Duke. Give orders that all diligent search be made
To seize these men, their characters are public;
The paper intimates their rendezvous
To be at the house of a famed Grecian courtesan
Called Aquilina; see that place secured.
Anto. What, my Nicky Nacky, Hurry Durry, Nicky Nacky in the plot —
I'll make a speech. Most noble senators,
What headlong apprehension drives you on,
Right noble, wise and truly solid senators,
To violate the laws and right of nations?
The lady is a lady of renown.
'Tis true, she holds a house of fair reception,
And though I say't myself, as many more
Can say as well as I.
2 Senator. My lord, long speeches
Are frivolous here, when dangers are so near us;
We all well know your interest in that lady,
The world talks loud on't.
Anto. Verily, I have done,

I say no more.
Duke. But since he has declared
Himself concerned, pray, captain, take great caution
To treat the fair one as becomes her character,
And let her bed-chamber be searched with decency.
You, Jaffeir, must with patience bear till morning
To be our prisoner.
Jaff. Would the chains of death
Had bound me fast ere I had known this minute;
I've done a deed will make my story hereafter
Quoted in competition with all ill ones.
The history of my wickedness shall run
Down through the low traditions of the vulgar,
And boys be [taught] to tell the tale of Jaffeir.
Duke. Captain, withdraw your prisoner.
Jaff. Sir, if possible,
Lead me where my own thoughts themselves may lose me,
Where I may doze out what I've left of life,
Forget myself and this day's guilt and falsehood.
Cruel remembrance, how shall I appease thee! (*Ex. guarded.*)
(*Noise without.*) More traitors; room,
room, make room there!
Duke. How's this, guards?
Where are our guards? shut up the gates, the treason's
Already at our doors.

(*Enter Officer.*)

Offic. My lords, more traitors,
Seized in the very act of consultation;
Furnished with arms and instruments of mischief.
Bring in the prisoners.

(*Enter* Pierre, Renault, Theodore, Eliot, Revillido, *and other Conspirators, in fetters, guarded.*)

Pierr. You, my lords and fathers,
(As you are pleased to call yourselves) of Venice,
If you sit here to guide the course of Justice,
Why these disgraceful chains upon the limbs
That have so often labored in your service?
Are these the wreaths of triumph ye bestow
On those that bring you conquests home and honors?
Duke. Go on, you shall be heard, sir.
Anto. And be hanged too, I hope.
Pierr. Are these the trophies I've deserved for fighting
Your battles with confederated powers,
When winds and seas conspired to overthrow you,
And brought the fleets of Spain to your own harbors?
When you, great Duke, shrunk trembling in your palace,
And saw your wife, th' Adriatic, ploughed
Like a lewd whore by bolder prows than yours,
Stepped not I forth, and taught your loose Venetians
The task of honor and the way to greatness,
Raised you from your capitulating fears
To stipulate the terms of sued-for peace?
And this my recompense? If I am a traitor,
Produce my charge; or show the wretch that's base enough
And brave enough to tell me I am a traitor.
Duke. Know you one Jaffeir?
(*All the Conspirators murmur.*)
Pierr. Yes, and know his virtue.
His justice, truth, his general worth, and sufferings
From a hard father taught me first to love him.

(*Enter* Jaffeir *guarded.*)

Duke. See him brought forth.
Pierr. My friend too bound? nay then
Our fate has conquered us, and we must fall.
Why droops the man whose welfare's so much mine
They're but one thing? These reverend tyrants, Jaffeir,

Call us all traitors; art thou one, my brother?
JAFF. To thee I am the falsest, veriest slave
That e'er betrayed a generous, trusting friend,
And gave up honor to be sure of ruin.
All our fair hopes which morning was to have crowned
Has this cursed tongue o'erthrown.
PIERR. So, then all's over.
Venice has lost her freedom; I my life.
No more; farewell.
DUKE. Say, will you make confession
Of your vile deeds and trust the Senate's mercy?
PIERR. Cursed be your Senate; cursed your constitution!
The curse of growing factions and division
Still vex your councils, shake your public safety,
And make the robes of government you wear
Hateful to you, as these base chains to me!
DUKE. Pardon or death?
PIERR. Death, honorable death!
REN. Death's the best thing we ask or you can give.
ALL CONSPIR. No shameful bonds, but honorable death.
DUKE. Break up the Council. Captain, guard your prisoners.
Jaffeir, y'are free, but these must wait for judgment.
(*Ex. all the Senators.*)
PIERR. Come, where's my dungeon? lead me to my straw.
It will not be the first time I've lodged hard
To do your Senate service.
JAFF. Hold one moment.
PIERR. Who's he disputes the judgment of the Senate?
Presumptuous rebel — on ——
(*Strikes* JAFF.)
JAFF. By heaven, you stir not!
I must be heard, I must have leave to speak.
Thou hast disgraced me, Pierre, by a vile blow.
Had not a dagger done thee nobler justice?
But use me as thou wilt, thou canst not wrong me,
For I am fallen beneath the basest injuries.
Yet look upon me with an eye of mercy,
With pity and with charity behold me;
Shut not thy heart against a friend's repentance,
But as there dwells a god-like nature in thee
Listen with mildness to my supplications.
PIERR. What whining monk art thou? what holy cheat
That wouldst encroach upon my credulous ears
And cant'st thus vilely? Hence! I know thee not.
Dissemble and be nasty. Leave me, hypocrite.
JAFF. Not know me, Pierre?
PIERR. No, know thee not. What art thou?
JAFF. Jaffeir, thy friend, thy once loved, valued friend,
Though now deservedly scorned, and used most hardly.
PIERR. Thou Jaffeir! Thou my once loved, valued friend!
By heavens, thou li'st! The man, so called, my friend,
Was generous, honest, faithful, just, and valiant,
Noble in mind, and in his person lovely,
Dear to my eyes and tender to my heart;
But thou a wretched, base, false, worthless coward,
Poor even in soul, and loathsome in thy aspect,
All eyes must shun thee, and all hearts detest thee.
Prithee, avoid, nor longer cling thus round me,
Like something baneful, that my nature's chilled at.
JAFF. I have not wronged thee, by these tears I have not,
But still am honest, true, and hope too, valiant;
My mind still full of thee; therefore, still noble.
Let not thy eyes then shun me, nor thy heart

Detest me utterly. Oh, look upon me,
Look back and see my sad sincere submission!
How my heart swells, as even 'twould burst my bosom;
Fond of its g[oa]l, and laboring to be at thee!
What shall I do? what say to make thee hear me?
Pierr. Hast thou not wronged me? dar'st thou call thyself
Jaffeir, that once loved, valued friend of mine,
And swear thou hast not wronged me? Whence these chains?
Whence the vile death which I may meet this moment?
Whence this dishonor, but from thee, thou false one?
Jaff. — All's true, yet grant one thing, and I've done asking.
Pierr. What's that?
Jaff. To take thy life on such conditions
The Council have proposed. Thou and thy friends
May yet live long, and to be better treated.
Pierr. Life! ask my life! confess! record myself
A villain for the privilege to breathe,
And carry up and down this cursed city
A discontented and repining spirit,
Burthensome to itself a few years longer,
To lose it, may be, at last in a lewd quarrel
For some new friend, treacherous and false as thou art!
No, this vile world and I have long been jangling,
And cannot part on better terms than now,
When only men like thee are fit to live in't.
Jaff. By all that's just ——
Pierr. Swear by some other powers,
For thou hast broke that sacred oath too lately.
Jaff. Then by that hell I merit, I'll not leave thee,
Till to thyself at least thou'rt reconciled,
However thy resentments deal with me.
Pierr. Not leave me!
Jaff. No, thou shalt not force me from thee.
Use me reproachfully, and like a slave,
Tread on me, buffet me, heap wrongs on wrongs
On my poor head. I'll bear it all with patience,
Shall weary out thy most unfriendly cruelty,
Lie at thy feet and kiss 'em though they spurn me,
Till, wounded by my sufferings, thou relent,
And raise me to thy arms with dear forgiveness.
Pierr. Art thou not ——
Jaff. What?
Pierr. A traitor?
Jaff. Yes.
Pierr. A villain?
Jaff. Granted.
Pierr. A coward, a most scandalous coward,
Spiritless, void of honor, one who has sold
Thy everlasting fame for shameless life?
Jaff. All, all, and more, much more; my faults are numberless.
Pierr. And wouldst thou have me live on terms like thine?
Base as thou art false ——
Jaff. No, 'tis to me that's granted;
The safety of thy life was all I aimed at,
In recompense for faith and trust so broken.
Pierr. I scorn it more because preserved by thee;
And as when first my foolish heart took pity
On thy misfortunes, sought thee in thy miseries,
Relieved thy wants, and raised thee from thy state
Of wretchedness in which thy fate had plunged thee,
To rank thee in my list of noble friends,
All I received in surety for thy truth,
Were unregarded oaths; and this, this dagger,
Given with a worthless pledge, thou since hast stol'n,
So I restore it back to thee again,
Swearing by all those powers which thou hast violated,
Never from this cursed hour to hold communion,

Friendship, or interest with thee, though our years
Were to exceed those limited the world.
Take it — farewell — for now I owe thee nothing.
Jaff. Say thou wilt live, then.
Pierr. For my life, dispose it
Just as thou wilt, because 'tis what I'm tired with.
Jaff. O Pierre!
Pierr. No more.
Jaff. My eyes won't lose the sight of thee,
But languish after thine, and ache with gazing.
Pierr. Leave me! — Nay, then, thus, thus, I throw thee from me,
And curses, great as is thy falsehood, catch thee!
Jaff. Amen. He's gone, my father, friend, preserver,
And here's the portion he has left me.
(*Holds the dagger up.*)
This dagger, well remembered, with this dagger
I gave a solemn vow of dire importance,
Parted with this and Belvidera together.
Have a care, Mem'ry, drive that thought no farther.
No, I'll esteem it as a friend's last legacy,
Treasure it up [with]in this wretched bosom,
Where it may grow acquainted with my heart,
That when they meet, they start not from each other.
So; now for thinking. A blow, called traitor, villain,
Coward, dishonorable coward, fogh!
Oh, for a long, sound sleep, and so forget it!
Down, busy devil —

(*Enter* Belvidera.)

Belv. Whither shall I fly?
Where hide me and my miseries together?
Where's now the Roman constancy I boasted?
Sunk into trembling fears and desperation!
Not daring now to look up to that dear face
Which used to smile even on my faults, but down
Bending these miserable eyes to earth,
Must move in penance, and implore much mercy.
Jaff. "Mercy"? Kind heaven has surely endless stores
Hoarded for thee of blessings yet untasted.
Let wretches loaded hard with guilt as I am,
Bow [with] the weight and groan beneath the burthen,
Creep with a remnant of that strength th'have left,
Before the footstool of that Heaven th'have injured.
O Belvidera! I'm the wretched'st creature
E'er crawled on earth; now if thou hast virtue, help me,
Take me into thy arms, and speak the words of peace
To my divided soul that wars within me,
And raises every sense to my confusion.
By heav'n, I am tottering on the very brink
Of peace; and thou art all the hold I've left.
Belv. Alas! I know thy sorrows are most mighty;
I know th'hast cause to mourn; to mourn, my Jaffeir,
With endless cries, and never-ceasing wailings.
Th'hast lost ——
Jaff. Oh, I have lost what can't be counted!
My friend too, Belvidera, that dear friend,
Who, next to thee, was all my health rejoiced in,
Has used me like a slave, shamefully used me.
'Twould break thy pitying heart to hear the story.
What shall I do? resentment, indignation,
Love, pity, fear, and mem'ry, how I've wronged him,
Distract my quiet with the very thought on't,
And tear my heart to pieces in my bosom.
Belv. What has he done?

Jaff. Thou'dst hate me, should I tell thee.
Belv. Why?
Jaff. Oh, he has used me! yet, by heaven, I bear it,
He has us'd me, Belvidera, — but first swear
That when I've told thee, thou'lt not loathe me utterly,
Though vilest blots and stains appear upon me;
But still at least with charitable goodness,
Be near me in the pangs of my affliction,
Not scorn me, Belvidera, as he has done.
Belv. Have I then e'er been false that now I am doubted?
Speak, what's the cause I'm grown into distrust,
Why thought unfit to hear my love's complainings?
Jaff. Oh!
Belv. Tell me.
Jaff. Bear my failings, for they are many.
O my dear angel! in that friend I've lost
All my soul's peace; for every thought of him
Strikes my sense hard, and deads it in my brains.
Wouldst thou believe it?
Belv. Speak.
Jaff. Before we parted,
Ere yet his guards had led him to his prison,
Full of severest sorrows for his suff'rings,
With eyes o'erflowing and a bleeding heart,
Humbling myself almost beneath my nature,
As at his feet I kneeled, and sued for mercy,
Forgetting all our friendship, all the dearness,
In which w'have lived so many years together,
With a reproachful hand, he dashed a blow,
He struck me, Belvidera, by heaven, he struck me,
Buffeted, called me traitor, villain, coward!
Am I a coward? am I a villain? tell me
Th'art the best judge, and mad'st me, if I am so.
Damnation, coward!
Belv. Oh! forgive him, Jaffeir.
And if his sufferings wound thy heart already,
What will they do to-morrow?
Jaff. Hah!
Belv. To-morrow,
When thou shalt see him stretched in all the agonies
Of a tormenting and a shameful death,
His bleeding bowels, and his broken limbs,
Insulted o'er by a vile butchering villain;
What will thy heart do then? Oh, sure 'twill stream
Like my eyes now.
Jaff. What means thy dreadful story?
Death, and to-morrow? broken limbs and bowels?
Insulted o'er by a vile butchering villain?
By all my fears I shall start out to madness,
With barely guessing if the truth's hid longer.
Belv. The faithless senators, 'tis they've decreed it.
They say according to our friend's request,
They shall have death, and not ignoble bondage;
Declare their promised mercy all as forfeited,
False to their oaths, and deaf to intercession.
Warrants are passed for public death to-morrow.
Jaff. Death! doomed to die! condemned unheard! unpleaded!
Belv. Nay, cruell'st racks and torments are preparing,
To force confessions from their dying pangs.
Oh, do not look so terribly upon me!
How your lips shake, and all your face disordered!
What means my love?
Jaff. Leave me, I charge thee, leave me — strong temptations
Wake in my heart.
Belv. For what?
Jaff. No more, but leave me.
Belv. Why?
Jaff. Oh! by heaven, I love thee with that fondness
I would not have thee stay a moment longer,

Near these cursed hands. Are they not cold upon thee?
(*Pulls the dagger half out of his bosom and puts it back again.*)
Belv. No, everlasting comfort's in thy arms.
To lean thus on thy breast is softer ease
Than downy pillows deck'd with leaves of roses.
Jaff. Alas, thou thinkest not of the thorns 'tis filled with.
Fly ere they [g]all thee. There's a lurking serpent,
Ready to leap and sting thee to thy heart.
Art thou not terrified?
Belv. No.
Jaff. Call to mind
What thou hast done, and whither thou hast brought me.
Belv. Hah!
Jaff. Where's my friend? my friend, thou smiling mischief?
Nay, shrink not, now 'tis too late; thou shouldst have fled
When thy guilt first had cause, for dire revenge
Is up and raging for my friend. He groans,
Hark, how he groans; his screams are in my ears
Already; see, th'have fixed him on the wheel,
And now they tear him! — Murther! perjured Senate!
Murther — Oh! — hark thee, trait'ress, thou hast done this,
Thanks to thy tears and false persuading love. (*Fumbling for his dagger.*)
How her eyes speak! O thou bewitching creature!
Madness cannot hurt thee. Come, thou little trembler,
Creep, even into my heart, and there lie safe.
'Tis thy own citadel — hah — yet stand off!
Heaven must have justice, and my broken vows
Will sink me else beneath its reaching mercy.
I'll wink and then 'tis done ——
Belv. What means the lord
Of me, my life and love? what's in thy bosom,
Thou grasp'st at so? Nay, why am I thus treated?
(*Draws the dagger, offers to stab her.*)
What wilt thou do? Ah! do not kill me, Jaffeir,
Pity these panting breasts, and trembling limbs,
That used to clasp thee when thy looks were milder,
That yet hang heavy on my unpurged soul,
And plunge it not into eternal darkness!
Jaff. No, Belvidera, when we parted last
I gave this dagger with thee as in trust
To be thy portion, if I e'er proved false.
On such condition was my truth believed;
But now 'tis forfeited and must be paid for. (*Offers to stab her again.*)
Belv. Oh, mercy! (*Kneeling.*)
Jaff. Nay, no struggling.
Belv. Now, then, kill me!
(*Leaps upon his neck and kisses him.*)
While thus I cling about thy cruel neck,
Kiss thy revengeful lips and die in joys
Greater than any I can guess hereafter.
Jaff. I am, I am a coward; witness't, heaven,
Witness it, earth, and every being, witness.
'Tis but one blow; yet, by immortal love,
I cannot bear a thought to harm thee!
(*He throws away the dagger and embraces her.*)
The seal of Providence is sure upon thee,
And thou wert born for yet unheard-of wonders.
Oh, thou wert either born to save or damn me!
By all the power that's given thee o'er my soul,
By thy resistless tears and conquering smiles,
By the victorious love that still waits on thee,
Fly to thy cruel father. Save my friend,
Or all our future quiet's lost for ever.
Fall at his feet, cling round his reverend knees;

Speak to him with thy eyes, and with thy tears
Melt his hard heart, and wake dead nature in him;
Crush him in th'arms, and torture him with thy softness;
Nor, till thy prayers are granted, set him free,
But conquer him, as thou hast vanquished me. (*Ex. ambo.*)

ACT V

[Scene I]

(*Enter* Priuli, *solus.*)

Priu. Why, cruel heaven, have my unhappy days
Been lengthened to this sad one? Oh! dishonor
And deathless infamy is fall'n upon me.
Was it my fault? Am I a traitor? No.
But then, my only child, my daughter, wedded;
There my best blood runs foul, and a disease
Incurable has seized upon my memory,
To make it rot and stink to after ages.
Cursed be the fatal minute when I got her;
Or would that I'd been anything but man,
And raised an issue which would ne'er have wronged me.
The miserablest creatures (man excepted)
Are not the less esteemed, though their posterity
Degenerate from the virtues of their fathers;
The vilest beasts are happy in their offsprings,
While only man gets traitors, whores, and villains.
Cursed be the names, and some swift blow from Fate
Lay his head deep, where mine may be forgotten.

(*Enter* Belvidera *in a long mourning veil.*)

Belv. He's there, my father, my inhuman father,
That, for three years, has left an only child
Exposed to all the outrages of Fate,
And cruel ruin — oh! ——
Priu. What child of sorrow
Art thou that com'st thus wrapt in weeds of sadness,
And mov'st as if thy steps were towards a grave?
Belv. A wretch, who from the very top of happiness
Am fallen into the lowest depths of misery,
And want your pitying hand to raise me up again.
Priu. Indeed thou talk'st as thou hadst tasted sorrows.
Would I could help thee!
Belv. 'Tis greatly in your power.
The world, too, speaks you charitable, and I,
Who ne'er asked alms before, in that dear hope
Am come a-begging to you, sir.
Priu. For what?
Belv. Oh, well regard me, is this voice a strange one?
Consider, too, when beggars once pretend
A case like mine, no little will content 'em.
Priu. What wouldst thou beg for?
Belv. Pity and forgiveness.
(*Throws up her veil.*)
By the kind tender names of child and father,
Hear my complaints and take me to your love.
Priu. My daughter?
Belv. Yes, your daughter, by a mother
Virtuous and noble, faithful to your honor,
Obedient to your will, kind to your wishes,
Dear to your arms. By all the joys she gave you,
When in her blooming years she was your treasure,
Look kindly on me; in my face behold
The lineaments of hers y'have kissed so often,
Pleading the cause of your poor cast-off child.
Priu. Thou art my daughter?
Belv. Yes — and y'have oft told me,
With smiles of love and chaste, paternal kisses,
I'd much resemblance of my mother.

Priu. Oh!
Hadst thou inherited her matchless virtues
I'd been too blessed.
Belv. Nay, do not call to memory
My disobedience, but let pity enter
Into your heart, and quite deface the impression;
For could you think how mine's perplexed, what sadness,
Fears, and despairs distract the peace within me,
Oh, you would take me in your dear, dear arms,
Hover with strong compassion o'er your young one,
To shelter me with a protecting wing,
From the black gathered storm, that's just, just breaking.
Priu. Don't talk thus.
Belv. Yes, I must, and you must hear too.
I have a husband.
Priu. Damn him!
Belv. Oh, do not curse him!
He would not speak so hard a word towards you,
On any terms, [howe'er] he deal with me.
Priu. Hah! what means my child?
Belv. Oh, there's but this short moment
'Twixt me and Fate, yet send me not with curses
Down to my grave; afford me one kind blessing
Before we part; just take me in your arms
And recommend me with a prayer to heaven,
That I may die in peace; and when I'm dead ——
Priu. How my soul's catched!
Belv. Lay me, I beg you, lay me
By the dear ashes of my tender mother.
She would have pitied me, had Fate yet spared her.
Priu. By heaven, my aching heart forebodes much mischief.
Tell me thy story, for I'm still thy father.
Belv. No, I'm contented.
Priu. Speak.
Belv. No matter.
Priu. Tell me.
By yo[n] blessed Heaven, my heart runs o'er with fondness.
Belv. Oh!
Priu. Utter't.
Belv. Oh, my husband, my dear husband
Carries a dagger in his once kind bosom
To pierce the heart of your poor Belvidera.
Priu. Kill thee?
Belv. Yes, kill me. When he passed his faith
And covenant, against your state and Senate,
He gave me up as hostage for his truth,
With me a dagger and a dire commission,
Whene'er he failed, to plunge it through this bosom.
I learned the danger, chose the hour of love
T'attempt his heart, and bring it back to honor.
Great love prevailed and blessed me with success.
He came, confessed, betrayed his dearest friends
For promised mercy. Now they're doomed to suffer,
Galled with remembrance of what then was sworn;
If they are lost, he vows t'appease the gods
With this poor life, and make my blood th' atonement.
Priu. Heavens!
Belv. Think you saw what passed at our last parting;
Think you beheld him like a raging lion,
Pacing the earth and tearing up his steps,
Fate in his eyes, and roaring with the pain
Of burning fury; think you saw his one hand
Fixed on my throat, while the extended other
Grasped a keen threat'ning dagger. Oh, 'twas thus
We last embraced, when, trembling with revenge,
He dragged me to the ground, and at my bosom
Presented horrid death, cried out: "My friends,
Where are my friends?" swore, wept, raged, threatened, loved,

For he yet loved, and that dear love preserved me,
To this last trial of a father's pity.
I fear not death, but cannot bear a thought
That that dear hand should do th' unfriendly office.
If I was ever then your care, now hear me:
Fly to the Senate, save the promised lives
Of his dear friends, ere mine be made the sacrifice.
Priu. Oh, my heart's comfort!
Belv. Will you not, my father?
Weep not, but answer me.
Priu. By heaven, I will.
Not one of 'em but what shall be immortal.
Canst thou forgive me all my follies past,
I'll henceforth be indeed a father; never,
Never more thus expose, but cherish thee,
Dear as the vital warmth that feeds my life,
Dear as these eyes that weep in fondness o'er thee.
Peace to thy heart. Farewell.
Belv. Go, and remember
'Tis Belvidera's life her father pleads for.
(*Ex. severally.*)

(*Enter* Antonio)

Hum, hum, hah,

Seignior Priuli, my lord Priuli, my lord, my lord, my lord. Now, we lords love to call one another by our titles. My lord, my lord, my lord — pox on him, I am a lord as well as he; and so let him fiddle. — I'll warrant him he's gone to the Senate-house, and I'll be there too, soon enough for somebody. 'Od, here's a tickling speech about the plot. I'll prove there's a plot with a vengeance — would I had it without book; let me see —

"Most reverend senators,

That there is a plot, surely by this time, no man that hath eyes or understanding in his head will presume to doubt, 'tis as plain as the light in the cowcumber" — no — hold there — cowcumber does not come in yet — "'tis as plain as the light in the sun, or as the man in the moon, even at noonday; it is indeed a pumpkin-plot, which, just as it was mellow, we have gathered, and now we have gathered it, prepared and dressed it, shall we throw it like a pickled cowcumber out at the window? No; that it is not only a bloody, horrid, execrable, damnable, and audacious plot, but it is, as I may so say, a saucy plot; and we all know, most reverend fathers, that what is sauce for a goose is sauce for a gander. Therefore, I say, as those bloodthirsty ganders of the conspiracy would have destroyed us geese of the Senate, let us make haste to destroy them, so I humbly move for hanging" — hah, hurry durry — I think this will do, tho' I was something out, at first, about the sun and the cowcumber.

(*Enter* Aquilina.)

Aquil. Good-morrow, senator.

Anto. Nacky, my dear Nacky, morrow, Nacky, 'od I am very brisk, very merry, very pert, very jovial — ha-a-a-a-a — kiss me, Nacky. How dost thou do, my little Tory, rory strumpet. Kiss me, I say, hussy, kiss me.

Aquil. "Kiss me, Nacky." Hang you, sir; coxcomb, hang you, sir.

Anto. Hayty, tayty, is it so indeed, with all my heart, faith — (*Sings.*) *hey then up go we*, faith — *hey then up go we*, dum dum derum dump.

Aquil. Seignior.

Anto. Madonna.

Aquil. Do you intend to die in your bed ——?

Anto. About threescore years hence, much may be done, my dear.

Aquil. You'll be hanged, seignior.

Anto. Hanged, sweetheart? Prithee, be quiet. Hanged, quotha, that's a merry conceit, with all my heart; why thou jok'st, Nacky, thou art given to joking, I'll swear; well, I protest, Nacky, nay, I must protest, and will protest that I love joking dearly, man. And I love thee for joking, and I'll kiss thee for joking, and towse thee for joking, and 'od, I have a devilish mind to take thee aside about that business for joking too, 'od I have, and (*sings*) *Hey then up go we*, dum dum derum dump.

Aquil. See you this, sir?
(*Draws a dagger.*)

Anto. O laud, a dagger! O laud! it is naturally my aversion; I cannot endure the sight on't; hide it for heaven's sake; I cannot look that way till it be gone — hide it, hide it, oh, oh, hide it!

Aquil. Yes, in your heart I'll hide it.

Anto. My heart! what, hide a dagger in my heart's blood!

Aquil. Yes, in thy heart, thy throat, thou pampered devil!
Thou hast helped to spoil my peace, and I'll have vengeance
On thy cursed life, for all the bloody Senate,
The perjured, faithless Senate. Where's my lord,
My happiness, my love, my god, my hero,
Doomed by thy accursed tongue, amongst the rest,
T'a shameful wrack? By all the rage that's in me
I'll be whole years in murthering thee.

Anto. Why, Nacky,
Wherefore so passionate? what have I done? what's the matter, my dear Nacky? am not I thy love, thy happiness, thy lord, thy hero, thy senator, and everything in the world, Nacky?

Aquil. Thou! think'st thou, thou art fit to meet my joys,
To bear the eager clasps of my embraces?
Give me my Pierre, or ——

Anto. Why, he's to be hanged, little Nacky,
Trussed up for treason, and so forth, child.

Aquil. Thou li'st! Stop down thy throat that hellish sentence,
Or 'tis thy last. Swear that my love shall live,
Or thou art dead.

Anto. Ah-h-h-h.

Aquil. Swear to recall his doom,
Swear at my feet, and tremble at my fury.

Anto. I do. Now if she would but kick a little bit, one kick now. Ah-h-h-h.

Aquil. Swear, or ——

Anto. I do, by these dear fragrant foots
And little toes, sweet as, — e-e-e-e my Nacky, Nacky, Nacky.

Aquil. How!

Anto. Nothing but untie thy shoestring a little, faith and troth;
That's all, that's all, as I hope to live, Nacky, that's all.

Aquil. Nay, then ——

Anto. Hold, hold, thy love, thy lord, thy hero
Shall be preserved and safe.

Aquil. Or may this poniard
Rust in thy heart.

Anto. With all my soul.

Aquil. Farewell ——
(*Ex.* Aquil.)

Anto. Adieu. Why, what a bloody-minded, inveterate, termagant strumpet have I been plagued with! Oh-h-h yet more! nay then I die, I die — I am dead already. (*Stretches himself out.*)

[Scene II]

(*Enter* Jaffeir.)

Jaff. Final destruction seize on all the world!
Bend down, ye heavens, and shutting round this earth,
Crush the vile globe into its first confusion;
Scorch it, with elemental flames, to one cursed cinder,
And all us little creepers in't, called men,
Burn, burn to nothing; but let Venice burn
Hotter than all the rest! Here kindle hell
Ne'er to extinguish, and let souls hereafter
Groan here, in all those pains which mine feels now.

(*Enter* Belvidera.)

Belv. My life —— (*Meeting him.*)

Jaff. My plague ——
(*Turning from her.*)

Belv. Nay then I see my ruin,
If I must die!

Jaff. No, Death's this day too busy;
Thy father's ill-timed mercy came too late.
I thank thee for thy labors tho' and him too,
But all my poor betrayed unhappy friends
Have summons to prepare for Fate's black hour;
And yet I live.

Belv. Then be the next my doom.

I see thou hast passed my sentence in thy heart,
And I'll no longer weep or plead against it,
But with the humblest, most obedient patience
Meet thy dear hands, and kiss 'em when they wound me.
Indeed I am willing, but I beg thee do it
With some remorse, and where thou giv'st the blow,
View me with eyes of a relenting love,
And show me pity, for 'twill sweeten justice.
Jaff. Show pity to thee?
Belv. Yes, and when thy hands,
Charged with my fate, come trembling to the deed,
As thou hast done a thousand thousand dear times
To this poor breast, when kinder rage has brought thee,
When our stinged hearts have leaped to meet each other,
And melting kisses sealed our lips together,
When joys have left me gasping in thy arms,
So let my death come now, and I'll not shrink from't.
Jaff. Nay, Belvidera, do not fear my cruelty,
Nor let the thoughts of death perplex thy fancy,
But answer me to what I shall demand
With a firm temper and unshaken spirit.
Belv. I will when I've done weeping ——
Jaff. Fie, no more on't. —
How long is't since the miserable day
We wedded first ——
Belv. Oh-h-h!
Jaff. Nay, keep in thy tears,
Lest they unman me too.
Belv. Heaven knows I cannot.
The words you utter sound so very sadly
These streams will follow ——
Jaff. Come, I'll kiss 'em dry, then.
Belv. But, was't a miserable day?
Jaff. A cursed one.
Belv. I thought it otherwise, and you've oft sworn
In the transporting hours of warmest love
When sure you spoke the truth, you've sworn you blessed it.
Jaff. 'Twas a rash oath.
Belv. Then why am I not cursed too?
Jaff. No, Belvidera; by th' eternal truth,
I dote with too much fondness.
Belv. Still so kind?
Still then do you love me?
Jaff. Nature, in her workings,
Inclines not with more ardor to creation,
Than I do now towards thee; man ne'er was blessed,
Since the first pair first met, as I have been.
Belv. Then sure you will not curse me.
Jaff. No, I'll bless thee.
I came on purpose, Belvidera, to bless thee.
'Tis now, I think, three years w'have lived together.
Belv. And may no fatal minute ever part us,
Till, reverend grown, for age and love, we go
Down to one grave, as our last bed, together;
There sleep in peace till an eternal morning.
Jaff. When will that be? (*Sighing.*)
Belv. I hope long ages hence.
Jaff. Have I not hitherto (I beg thee tell me
Thy very fears) used thee with tender'st love?
Did e'er my soul rise up in wrath against thee?
Did e'er I frown when Belvidera smiled,
Or, by the least unfriendly word, betray
Abating passion? Have I ever wronged thee?
Belv. No.
Jaff. Has my heart, or have my eyes e'er wandered
To any other woman?
Belv. Never, never —
I were the worst of false ones should I accuse thee.
I own I've been too happy, blessed above
My sex's charter.

Jaff. Did I not say I came to bless thee?
Belv. Yes.
Jaff. Then hear me, bounteous heaven!
Pour down your blessings on this beauteous head,
Where everlasting sweets are always springing.
With a continual giving hand, let peace,
Honor, and safety, always hover round her;
Feed her with plenty, let her eyes ne'er see
A sight of sorrow, nor her heart know mourning;
Crown all her days with joy, her nights with rest,
Harmless as her own thoughts, and prop her virtue,
To bear the loss of one that too much loved,
And comfort her with patience in our parting.
Belv. How, parting! parting!
Jaff. Yes, for ever parting.
I have sworn, Belvidera, by yon heaven,
That best can tell how much I lose to leave thee,
We part this hour for ever.
Belv. Oh, call back
Your cruel blessings, stay with me and curse me!
Jaff. No, 'tis resolved.
Belv. Then hear me too, just heaven!
Pour down your curses on this wretched head
With never-ceasing vengeance; let despair,
Danger, or infamy, nay all, surround me;
Starve me with wantings; let my eyes ne'er see
A sight of comfort, nor my heart know peace;
But dash my days with sorrow, nights with horrors
Wild as my own thoughts now, and let loose fury
To make me mad enough for what I lose,
If I must lose him. If I must! I will not.
Oh, turn and hear me!
Jaff. Now hold, heart, or never.
Belv. By all the tender days we've lived together,
By all our charming nights, and joys that crowned 'em,
Pity my sad condition, — speak, but speak.
Jaff. Oh-h-h!
Belv. By these arms that now cling round thy neck,
By this dear kiss and by ten thousand more,
By these poor streaming eyes ——
Jaff. Murther! unhold me.
By th'immortal destiny that doomed me
(*Draws his dagger.*)
To this cursed minute, I'll not live one longer.
Resolve to let me go or see me fall ——
Belv. Hold, sir, be patient.
Jaff. Hark, the dismal bell
(*Passing-bell tolls.*)
Tolls out for death; I must attend its call too,
For my poor friend, my dying Pierre, expects me.
He sent a message to require I'd see him
Before he died, and take his last forgiveness.
Farewell for ever.
(*Going out, looks back at her.*)
Belv. Leave thy dagger with me.
Bequeath me something. — Not one kiss at parting?
O my poor heart, when wilt thou break?
Jaff. Yet stay,
We have a child, as yet a tender infant.
Be a kind mother to him when I am gone,
Breed him in virtue and the paths of honor,
But let him never know his father's story.
I charge thee guard him from the wrongs my fate
May do his future fortune or his name.
Now — nearer yet —
(*Approaching each other.*)
Oh, that my arms were riveted
Thus round thee ever! But my friends, my oath!
This and no more. (*Kisses her.*)
Belv. Another, sure another,
For that poor little one you've ta'en care of,
I'll give't him truly.
Jaff. So, now farewell.
Belv. For ever?
Jaff. Heaven knows for ever; all good angels guard thee.
[*Exit.*]

Belv. All ill ones sure had charge of me this moment.
Cursed be my days, and doubly cursed my nights,
Which I must now mourn out in widowed tears.
Blasted be every herb and fruit and tree,
Cursed be the rain that falls upon the earth,
And may the general curse reach man and beast!
Oh, give me daggers, fire, or water!
How I could bleed, how burn, how drown, the waves
Huzzing and booming round my sinking head,
Till I descended to the peaceful bottom!
Oh, there's all quiet, here all rage and fury!
The air's too thin, and pierces my weak brain.
I long for thick substantial sleep. Hell, hell,
Burst from the centre, rage and roar aloud,
If thou art half so hot, so mad as I am!

(*Enter* Priuli *and Servants.*)

Who's there?
Priu. Run, seize and bring her safely home. (*They seize her.*)
Guard her as you would life. Alas, poor creature!
Belv. What? To my husband then conduct me quickly.
Are all things ready? shall we die most gloriously?
Say not a word of this to my old father.
Murmuring streams, soft shades, and springing flowers,
Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber. (*Ex.*)

[Scene III]

(*Scene opening discovers a Scaffold and a Wheel prepared for the executing of* Pierre; *then enter other Officers,* Pierre, *and Guards, a Friar, Executioner, and a great Rabble.*)

Offic. Room, room there. — Stand all by, make room for the prisoner.
Pierr. My friend not come yet?
Father. Why are you so obstinate?
Pierr. Why you so troublesome, that a poor wretch
Cannot die in peace,
But you, like ravens, will be croaking round him?
Fath. Yet, Heaven ——
Pierr. I tell thee, Heaven and I are friends.
I ne'er broke peace with't yet, by cruel murthers,
Rapine, or perjury, or vile deceiving,
But lived in moral justice towards all men;
Nor am a foe to the most strong believers,
Howe'er my own short-sighted faith confine me.
Fath. But an all-seeing Judge ——
Pierr. You say my conscience
Must be mine accuser. I have searched that conscience,
And find no records there of crimes that scare me.
Fath. 'Tis strange you should want faith.
Pierr. You want to lead
My reason blindfold, like a hampered lion,
Checked of its nobler vigor; then, when baited
Down to obedient tameness, make it couch;
And show strange tricks which you call signs of faith.
So silly souls are gulled and you get money.
Away, no more! Captain, I would hereafter
This fellow write no lies of my conversion,
Because he has crept upon my troubled hours.

(*Enter* Jaffeir.)

Jaff. Hold. Eyes, be dry; heart, strengthen me to bear
This hideous sight, and humble me, [to] take
The last forgiveness of a dying friend,
Betrayed by my vile falsehood to his ruin.
O Pierre!
Pierr. Yet nearer.
Jaff. Crawling on my knees,
And prostrate on the earth, let me upproach thee.

How shall I look up to thy injured face,
That always used to smile with friendship on me?
It darts an air of so much manly virtue,
That I, methinks, look little in thy sight,
And stripes are fitter for me than embraces.
Pierr. Dear to my arms, though thou hast undone my fame,
I cannot forget to love thee. Prithee, Jaffeir,
Forgive that filthy blow my passion dealt thee;
I am now preparing for the land of peace,
And fain would have the charitable wishes
Of all good men, like thee, to bless my journey.
Jaff. Good! I am the vilest creature, worse than e'er
Suffered the shameful fate thou art going to taste of.
Why was I sent for to be used thus kindly?
Call, call me villain, as I am, describe
The foul complexion of my hateful deeds,
Lead me to the rack, and stretch me in thy stead,
I've crimes enough to give it its full load,
And do it credit. Thou wilt but spoil the use on't,
And honest men hereafter bear its figure
About 'em, as a charm from treacherous friendship.
Offic. The time grows short, your friends are dead already.
Jaff. Dead!
Pierr. Yes, dead, Jaffeir; they've all died like men too,
Worthy their character.
Jaff. And what must I do?
Pierr. O Jaffeir!
Jaff. Speak aloud thy burthened soul,
And tell thy troubles to thy tortured friend.
Pierr. Friend! Couldst thou yet be a friend, a generous friend,
I might hope comfort from thy noble sorrows.
Heav'n knows I want a friend.
Jaff. And I a kind one,
That would not thus scorn my repenting virtue,
Or think, when he is to die, my thoughts are idle.
Pierr. No! Live, I charge thee, Jaffeir.
Jaff. Yes, I will live,
But it shall be to see thy fall revenged
At such a rate, as Venice long shall groan for.
Pierr. Wilt thou?
Jaff. I will, by Heav'n.
Pierr. Then still thou'rt noble,
And I forgive thee, oh — yet — shall I trust thee?
Jaff. No; I've been false already.
Pierr. Dost thou love me?
Jaff. Rip up my heart, and satisfy thy doubtings.
Pierr. Curse on this weakness!
(*He weeps.*)
Jaff. Tears! Amazement! Tears!
I never saw thee melted thus before;
And know there's something laboring in thy bosom
That must have vent. Though I'm a villain, tell me.
Pierr. Seest thou that engine?
(*Pointing to the wheel.*)
Jaff. Why?
Pierr. Is't fit a soldier, who has lived with honor,
Fought nations' quarrels, and been crowned with conquest,
Be exposed a common carcase on a wheel?
Jaff. Hah!
Pierr. Speak! is't fitting?
Jaff. Fitting?
Pierr. Yes, is't fitting?
Jaff. What's to be done?
Pierr. I'd have thee undertake
Something that's noble, to preserve my memory
From the disgrace that's ready to attaint it.
Offic. The day grows late, sir.
Pierr. I'll make haste! O Jaffeir,
Though thou'st betrayed me, do me some way justice.
Jaff. No more of that. Thy wishes shall be satisfied.
I have a wife, and she shall bleed; my child too
Yield up his little throat, and all t'appease thee ——
(*Going away* Pierre *holds him.*)

PIERR. No — this — no more!
(*He whispers* JAFFEIR.)
JAFF. Hah! is't then so?
PIERR. Most certainly.
JAFF. I'll do't.
PIERR. Remember.
OFFIC. Sir.
PIERR. Come, now I'm ready.
(*He and* JAFFEIR *ascend the scaffold.*)
Captain, you should be a gentleman of honor;
Keep off the rabble, that I may have room
To entertain my fate, and die with decency.
Come!
(*Takes off his gown. Executioner prepares to bind him.*)
FATH. Son!
PIERR. Hence, tempter.
OFFIC. Stand off, priest!
PIERR. I thank you, sir.
(*To* JAFFEIR.)
You'll think on't.
JAFF. 'Twon't grow stale before to-morrow.
PIERR. Now, Jaffeir! now I am going. Now —
(*Executioner having bound him.*)
JAFF. Have at thee,
Thou honest heart, then — here —
(*Stabs him.*)
And this is well too. (*Then stabs himself.*)
FATH. Damnable deed!
PIERR. Now thou hast indeed been faithful.
This was done nobly. — We have deceived the Senate.
JAFF. Bravely.
PIERR. Ha! ha! ha! — oh! oh! ——
(*Dies.*)
JAFF. Now, ye cursed rulers,
Thus of the blood y'have shed I make libation,
And sprinkl't mingling. May it rest upon you,
And all your race. Be henceforth Peace a stranger
Within your walls; let plagues and famine waste
Your generations. — Oh, poor Belvidera!
Sir, I have a wife, bear this in safety to her,
A token that with my dying breath I blessed her,
And the dear little infant left behind me.
I am sick — I'm quiet ——
(JAFFEIR *dies.*)
OFFIC. Bear this news to the Senate,
And guard their bodies till there's farther order.
Heav'n grant I die so well —
(*Scene shuts upon them.*)

[SCENE IV]

(*Soft music. Enter* BELVIDERA *distracted, led by two of her women,* PRIULI, *and Servants.*)

PRIU. Strengthen her heart with patience, pitying Heav'n.
BELV. Come, come, come, come, come! Nay, come to bed!
Prithee, my love. The winds! hark, how they whistle!
And the rain beats. Oh, how the weather shrinks me!
You are angry now, who cares? pish, no indeed.
Choose then, I say you shall not go, you shall not;
Whip your ill nature; get you gone then! oh, (JAFFEIR'S *ghost rises.*)
Are you returned? See, father, here he's come again!
Am I to blame to love him? O thou dear one! (*Ghost sinks.*)
Why do you fly me? are you angry still, then?
Jaffeir? where art thou? Father, why do you do thus?
Stand off, don't hide him from me. He's here somewhere.
Stand off, I say! what, gone? remember't, tyrant!
I may revenge myself for this trick one day.
I'll do't — I'll do't! Renault's a nasty fellow.

(*Enter Officer and others.*)

Hang him, hang him, hang him.
PRIU. News, what news?
(*Officer whispers* PRIULI.)
OFFIC. Most sad, sir.
Jaffeir, upon the scaffold, to prevent

A shameful death, stabbed Pierre, and next himself.
Both fell together.
(*The ghosts of* Jaffeir *and* Pierre *rise together, both bloody.*)
Priu. Daughter.
Belv. Hah, look there!
My husband bloody, and his friend, too! Murther!
Who has done this? Speak to me, thou sad vision, (*Ghosts sink.*)
On these poor trembling knees I beg it. Vanished!
Here they went down. Oh, I'll dig, dig the den up.
You shan't delude me thus. Hoa, Jaffeir, Jaffeir,
Peep up and give me but a look. I have him!
I've got him, father. Oh, now how I'll smuggle him!
My love! my dear! my blessing! help me, help me!
They have hold on me, and drag me to the bottom.
Nay — now they pull so hard — farewell —— (*She dies.*)
Maid. She's dead.
Breathless and dead.
Priu. Then guard me from the sight on't.
Lead me into some place that's fit for mourning;
Where the free air, light, and the cheerful sun
May never enter. Hang it round with black;
Set up one taper that may last a day —
As long as I've to live; and there all leave me.

Sparing no tears when you this tale relate,
But bid all cruel fathers dread my fate.
(*Curtain falls. Ex. omnes.*)

EPILOGUE

The text is done, and now for application,
And when that's ended, pass your approbation.
Though the conspiracy's prevented here,
Methinks I see another hatching there;
And there's a certain faction fain would sway,
If they had strength enough, and damn this play,
But this the author bade me boldly say:
If any take his plainness in ill part,
He's glad on't from the bottom of his heart;
Poets in honor of the truth should write,
With the same spirit brave men for it fight;
And though against him causeless hatreds rise,
And daily where he goes of late, he spies
The scowls of sullen and revengeful eyes,
'Tis what he knows with much contempt to bear,
And serves a cause too good to let him fear:
He fears no poison from an incensed drab,
No ruffian's five-foot sword, nor rascal's stab,
Nor any other snares of mischief laid,
Not a Rose-alley cudgel-ambuscade,
From any private cause where malice reigns,
Or general pique all blockheads have to brains:
Nothing shall daunt his pen when Truth does call,
No, not the picture mangler at Guildhall.
The rebel tribe, of which that vermin's one,
Have now set forward and their course begun;
And while that Prince's figure they deface,
  As they before had massacred his name,
Durst their base fears but look him in the face,
  They'd use his person as they've used his fame;
A face, in which such lineaments they read
Of that great martyr's, whose rich blood they shed,
That their rebellious hate they still retain,
And in his son would murder him again:
With indignation then, let each brave heart,
Rouse and unite to take his injured part;
Till royal love and goodness call him home,
And songs of triumph meet him as he come;
Till Heaven his honor and our peace restore,
And villains never wrong his virtue more.

THE PROVOKED WIFE
A COMEDY

By SIR JOHN VANBRUGH

(1697)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Constant	Lady Brute
Heartfree	Belinda, her niece
Sir John Brute	Lady Fancyful
Treble, a singing master	Mademoiselle
Rasor, valet de chambre to Sir J[ohn] B[rute]	Cor[net] and Pipe, servants to Lady Fancyful.
[Lovewell, Page to Lady Brute]	
Justice of the Peace	
Lord Rake, } Companions to Sir John Brute	
Col[onel] Bully, } Companions to Sir John Brute	
Constable and Watch	

[Scene — London.]

PROLOGUE

SPOKE[N] BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE

Since 'tis the intent and business of the stage,
To copy out the follies of the age;
To hold to every man a faithful glass,
And show him of what species he's an ass:
I hope the next that teaches in the school,
Will show our author he's a scribbling fool.
And that the satire may be sure to bite,
Kind heav'n! inspire some venomed priest to write,
And grant some ugly lady may indite!
For I would have him lashed, by heav'ns! I would,
Till his presumption swam away in blood.
Three plays at once proclaims a face of brass,
No matter what they are! That's not the case;
To write three plays, e'en that's to be an ass.
But what I least forgive, he knows it too,
For to his cost he lately has known you.
Experience shows, to many a writer's smart,
You hold a court where mercy ne'er had part;
So much of the old serpent's sting you have,
You love to damn, as heav'n delights to save.
In foreign parts, let a bold volunteer,
For public good, upon the stage appear,
He meets ten thousand smiles to dissipate his fear.
All tickle on th' adventuring young beginner,
And only scourge th' incorrigible sinner;
They touch indeed his faults, but with a hand
So gentle, that his merit still may stand:
Kindly they buoy the follies of his pen,
That he may shun 'em when he writes again.
But 'tis not so in this good-natur'd town,
All's one, an ox, a poet, or a crown;
Old England's play was always knocking down.

THE PROVOKED WIFE

A COMEDY

ACT I.

Scene [I.] — Sir John Brute's *house*

(*Enter* Sir John [Brute], *solus.*)

Sir John. What cloying meat is love — when matrimony's the sauce to it! Two years' marriage has debauched my five senses. Everything I see, everything I hear, everything I feel, everything I smell, and everything I taste — methinks has wife in't. No boy was ever so weary of his tutor, no girl of her bib, no nun of doing penance, nor old maid of being chaste, as I am of being married. Sure, there's a secret curse entailed upon the very name of wife. My lady is a young lady, a fine lady, a witty lady, a virtuous lady — and yet I hate her. There is but one thing on earth I loathe beyond her: that's fighting. Would my courage come up but to a fourth part of my ill-nature, I'd stand buff to her relations, and thrust her out of doors. But marriage has sunk me down to such an ebb of resolution, I dare not draw my sword, though even to get rid of my wife. But here she comes.

(*Enter* Lady Brute.)

Lady B. Do you dine at home to-day, Sir John?

Sir John. Why, do you expect I should tell you what I don't know myself?

Lady B. I thought there was no harm in asking you.

Sir John. If thinking wrong were an excuse for impertinence, women might be justified in most things they say or do.

Lady B. I'm sorry I've said anything to displease you.

Sir John. Sorrow for things past is of as little importance to me, as my dining at home or abroad ought to be to you.

Lady B. My inquiry was only that I might have provided what you liked.

Sir John. Six to four you have been in the wrong there again; for what I liked yesterday I don't like to-day, and what I like to-day, 'tis odds I mayn't like to-morrow.

Lady B. But if I had asked you what you liked?

Sir John. Why, then there would be more asking about it than the thing is worth.

Lady B. I wish I did but know how I might please you.

Sir John. Ay, but that sort of knowledge is not a wife's talent.

Lady B. Whate'er my talent is, I'm sure my will has ever been to make you easy.

Sir John. If women were to have their wills, the world would be finely governed.

Lady B. What reason have I given you to use me as you do of late? It once was otherwise: you married me for love.

Sir John. And you me for money. So you have your reward, and I have mine.

Lady B. What is it that disturbs you?

Sir John. A parson.

Lady B. Why, what has he done to you?

Sir John. He has married me.

(*Exit* Sir John.)

Lady B. The devil's in the fellow, I think! — I was told before I married him that thus 'twould be; but I thought I had charms enough to govern him; and that where there was an estate, a woman must needs be happy; so my vanity has deceived me, and my ambition has made me uneasy. But [there's] some comfort still; if one would be revenged of him, these are good times; a woman may have a gallant, and a separate maintenance too. — The surly puppy — yet he's a fool for't;

for hitherto he has been no monster: but who knows how far he may provoke me? I never loved him, yet I have been ever true to him; and that, in spite of all the attacks of art and nature upon a poor weak woman's heart, in favor of a tempting lover. Methinks so noble a defence as I have made should be rewarded with a better usage — Or who can tell — Perhaps a good part of what I suffer from my husband may be a judgment upon me for my cruelty to my lover. — Lord, with what pleasure could I indulge that thought, were there but a possibility of finding arguments to make it good! — And how do I know but there may — Let me see — What opposes? — My matrimonial vow? — Why, what did I vow? I think I promised to be true to my husband. Well; and he promised to be kind to me. But he han't kept his word. — Why, then, I'm absolved from mine — ay, that seems clear to me. The argument's good between the king and the people, why not between the husband and the wife? Oh, but that condition was not expressed. — No matter, 'twas understood. Well, by all I see, if I argue the matter a little longer with myself, I shan't find so many bugbears in the way as I thought I should. Lord, what fine notions of virtue do we women take up upon the credit of old foolish philosophers! Virtue's its own reward, virtue's this, virtue's that; — virtue's an ass, and a gallant's worth forty on't.

(*Enter* BELINDA.)

LADY B. Good-morrow, dear cousin.

BEL. Good-morrow, madam; you look pleased this morning.

LADY B. I am so.

BEL. With what, pray?

LADY B. With my husband.

BEL. Drown husbands! for yours is a provoking fellow. As he went out just now, I prayed him to tell me what time of day 'twas; and he asked me if I took him for the church-clock, that was obliged to tell all the parish.

LADY B. He has been saying some good obliging things to me too. In short, Belinda, he has used me so barbarously of late, that I could almost resolve to play the downright wife, — and cuckold him.

BEL. That would be downright indeed.

LADY B. Why, after all, there's more to be said for't than you'd imagine, child. I know, according to the strict statute law of religion, I should do wrong; but if there were a Court of Chancery in Heaven, I'm sure I should cast him.

BEL. If there were a House of Lords you might.

LADY B. In either I should infallibly carry my cause. Why, he is the first aggressor. Not I.

BEL. Ay, but you know, we must return good for evil.

LADY B. That may be a mistake in the translation. — Prithee, be of my opinion, Belinda; for I'm positive I'm in the right; and if you'll keep up the prerogative of a woman, you'll likewise be positive you are in the right, whenever you do anything you have a mind to. But I shall play the fool, and jest on till I make you begin to think I'm in earnest.

BEL. I shan't take the liberty, madam, to think of anything that you desire to keep a secret from me.

LADY B. Alas, my dear! I have no secrets. My heart could never yet confine my tongue.

BEL. Your eyes, you mean; for I am sure I have seen them gadding, when your tongue has been locked up safe enough.

LADY B. My eyes gadding! prithee after who, child?

BEL. Why, after one that thinks you hate him, as much as I know you love him.

LADY B. Constant, you mean.

BEL. I do so.

LADY B. Lord, what should put such a thing into your head?

BEL. That which puts things into most people's heads — observation.

LADY B. Why, what have you observed, in the name of wonder?

BEL. I have observed you blush when you meet him; force yourself away from him; and then be out of humor with everything about you. In a word, never was poor creature so spurred on by desire, and so reined in with fear!

LADY B. How strong is fancy!

Bel. How weak is woman!

Lady B. Prithee, niece, have a better opinion of your aunt's inclinations.

Bel. Dear aunt, have a better opinion of your niece's understanding.

Lady B. You'll make me angry.

Bel. You'll make me laugh.

Lady B. Then you are resolved to persist?

Bel. Positively.

Lady B. And all I can say —

Bel. Will signify nothing.

Lady B. Though I should swear 'twere false —

Bel. I should think it true.

Lady B. Then let us both forgive — (*kissing her*) for we have both offended: I in making a secret, you in discovering it.

Bel. Good-nature may do much: but you have more reason to forgive one, than I have to pardon t'other.

Lady B. 'Tis true, Belinda, you have given me so many proofs of your friendship, that my reserve has been indeed a crime. But that you may more easily forgive me, remember, child, that when our nature prompts us to a thing our honor and religion have forbid us, we would (were't possible) conceal, even from the soul itself, the knowledge of the body's weakness.

Bel. Well, I hope, to make your friend amends, you'll hide nothing from her for the future, though the body should still grow weaker and weaker.

Lady B. No, from this moment I have no more reserve; and for a proof of my repentance, I own, Belinda, I'm in danger. Merit and wit assault me from without; nature and love solicit me within; my husband's barbarous usage piques me to revenge; and Satan, catching at the fair occasion, throws in my way that vengeance which, of all vengeance, pleases women best.

Bel. 'Tis well Constant don't know the weakness of the fortifications; for, o' my conscience, he'd soon come on to the assault.

Lady B. Ay, and I'm afraid carry the town too. But whatever you may have observed, I have dissembled so well as to keep him ignorant. So you see I'm no coquette, Belinda: and if you'll follow my advice, you'll never be one neither. 'Tis true, coquetry is one of the main ingredients in the natural composition of a woman; and I, as well as others, could be well enough pleased to see a crowd of young fellows ogling and glancing and watching all occasions to do forty foolish officious things: nay, should some of 'em push on, even to hanging or drowning, why — faith — if I should let pure woman alone, I should e'en be but too well pleased with't.

Bel. I'll swear 'twould tickle me strangely.

Lady B. But after all, 'tis a vicious practice in us to give the least encouragement but where we design to come to a conclusion. For 'tis an unreasonable thing to engage a man in a disease which we beforehand resolve we never will apply a cure to.

Bel. 'Tis true; but then a woman must abandon one of the supreme blessings of her life. For I am fully convinced, no man has half that pleasure in possessing a mistress, as a woman has in jilting a gallant.

Lady B. The happiest woman then on earth must be our neighbor.

Bel. O the impertinent composition! She has vanity and affectation enough to make her a ridiculous original, in spite of all that art and nature ever furnished to any of her sex before her.

Lady B. She concludes all men her captives; and whatever course they take, it serves to confirm her in that opinion.

Bel. If they shun her, she thinks 'tis modesty, and takes it for a proof of their passion.

Lady B. And if they are rude to her, 'tis conduct, and done to prevent town-talk.

Bel. When her folly makes 'em laugh, she thinks they are pleased with her wit.

Lady B. And when her impertinence makes 'em dull, concludes they are jealous of her favors.

Bel. All their actions and their words, she takes for granted, aim at her.

Lady B. And pities all other women, because she thinks they envy her.

Bel. Pray, out of pity to ourselves, let us find a better subject, for I am weary of this. Do you think your husband inclined to jealousy?

Lady B. Oh, no; he does not love me well enough for that. Lord, how wrong men’s maxims are! They are seldom jealous of their wives, unless they are very fond of ’em; whereas they ought to consider the women’s inclinations, for there depends their fate. Well, men may talk; but they are not so wise as we — that’s certain.

Bel. At least in our affairs.

Lady B. Nay, I believe we should outdo ’em in the business of the state too; for methinks they do and undo, and make but bad work on’t.

Bel. Why then don’t we get into the intrigues of government as well as they?

Lady B. Because we have intrigues of our own, that make us more sport, child. And so let’s in, and consider of ’em. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene [II.] — *A dressing room*

(*Enter* Lady Fancyful, Mademoiselle, *and* Cornet.)

Lady Fan. How do I look this morning?

Cor. Your ladyship looks very ill, truly.

Lady Fan. Lard, how ill-natured thou art, Cornet, to tell me so, though the thing should be true. Don’t you know that I have humility enough to be but too easily out of conceit with myself? Hold the glass; I dare swear that will have more manners than you have. — Mademoiselle, let me have your opinion too.

Mad. My opinion pe, matam, dat your ladyship never look so well in your life.

Lady Fan. Well, the French are the prettiest obliging people; they say the most acceptable, well-mannered things — and never flatter.

Mad. Your ladyship say great justice inteed.

Lady Fan. Nay, everything’s just in my house but Cornet. The very looking-glass gives her the *démenti*. But I’m almost afraid it flatters me, it makes me look so very engaging. (*Looking affectedly in the glass.*)

Mad. Inteed, matam, your face pe hansomer den all de looking-glass in tee world, *croyez-moi!*

Lady Fan. But is it possible my eyes can be so languishing — and so very full of fire?

Mad. Matam, if de glass was burning-glass, I believe your eyes set de fire in de house.

Lady Fan. You may take that night-gown, Mademoiselle; — get out of the room, Cornet; I can’t endure you. (*Exit* Cornet.) This wench, methinks, does look so unsufferably ugly.

Mad. Every ting look ugly, matam, dat stand by your latiship.

Lady Fan. No really, Mademoiselle, methinks you look mighty pretty.

Mad. Ah, matam, de moon have no éclat, ven de sun appear.

Lady Fan. O pretty expression! Have you ever been in love, Mademoiselle?

Mad. *Oui*, matam. (*Sighing.*)

Lady Fan. And were you beloved again?

Mad. No, matam. (*Sighing.*)

Lady Fan. O ye gods! what an unfortunate creature should I be in such a case! But nature has made me nice for my own defence: I’m nice, strangely nice, Mademoiselle; I believe were the merit of whole mankind bestowed upon one single person, I should still think the fellow wanted something to make it worth my while to take notice of him. And yet I could love; nay, fondly love, were it possible to have a thing made on purpose for me: for I’m not cruel, Mademoiselle, I’m only nice.

Mad. Ah, matam, I wish I was fine gentleman for your sake. I do all de ting in de world to get leetle way into your heart. I make song, I make verse, I give you de serenade, I give great many present to Mademoiselle; I no eat, I no sleep, I be lean, I be mad, I hang myself, I drown myself. *Ah, ma chère dame, que je vous aimerais!* (*Embracing her.*)

Lady Fan. Well, the French have strange obliging ways with ’em; you may take those two pair of gloves, Mademoiselle.

Mad. Me humbly tanke my sweet lady.

(*Enter* Cornet.)

Cor. Madam, here's a letter for your ladyship by the penny-post. (*Exit.*)

Lady Fan. Some new conquest, I'll warrant you. For without vanity, I looked extremely clear last night, when I went to the Park. — O agreeable! Here's a new song made of me. And ready set too. O thou welcome thing! (*Kissing it.*) Call Pipe hither, she shall sing it instantly.

(*Enter* Pipe.)

Here, sing me this new song, Pipe.

Song.

I.

Fly, fly, you happy shepherds, fly,
Avoid Philira's charms;
The rigor of her heart denies
The heaven that's in her arms.
Ne'er hope to gaze, and then retire,
Nor yielding, to be blest:
Nature, who form'd her eyes of fire,
Of ice composed her breast.

II.

Yet, lovely maid, this once believe
A slave whose zeal you move:
The gods, alas, your youth deceive,
Their heaven consists in love.
In spite of all the thanks you owe,
You may reproach 'em this,
That where they did their form bestow,
They have denied their bliss.

[*Exit* Pipe.]

Lady Fan. Well, there may be faults, Mademoiselle, but the design is so very obliging, 'twould be a matchless ingratitude in me to discover 'em.

Mad. *Ma foi*, matam, I tink de gentleman's song tell you de trute. If you never love, you never be happy — Ah — *que j'aime l'amour moi!*

(*Enter* [Cornet].)

[Cor.] Madam, here's another letter for your ladyship. [*Exit.*]

Lady Fan. 'Tis thus I am importuned every morning, Mademoiselle. Pray how do the French ladies when they are thus *accablées?*

Mad. Matam, dey never complain. *Au contraire.* When one Frense laty have got hundred lover — den she do all she can — to get hundred more.

Lady Fan. Well, strike me dead, I think they have *le goût bon!* For 'tis an unutterable pleasure to be adored by all the men, and envied by all the women. — Yet I'll swear I'm concerned at the torture I give 'em. Lard, why was I formed to make the whole creation uneasy? But let me read my letter. (*Reads.*) "If you have a mind to hear of your faults, instead of being praised for your virtues, take the pains to walk in the Green-walk in St. James's with your woman an hour hence. You'll there meet one who hates you for some things, as he could love you for others, and therefore is willing to endeavor your reformation. — If you come to the place I mention, you'll know who I am; if you don't, you never shall, — so take your choice." — This is strangely familiar, Mademoiselle; now have I a provoking fancy to know who this impudent fellow is.

Mad. Den take your scarf and your mask, and go to de rendezvous. De Frense laty do *justement comme ça.*

Lady Fan. Rendezvous! What, rendezvous with a man, Mademoiselle!

Mad. *Eh, pourquoi non?*

Lady Fan. What, and a man perhaps I never saw in my life!

Mad. *Tant mieux: c'est donc quelque chose de nouveau.*

Lady Fan. Why, how do I know what designs he may have? He may intend to ravish me, for aught I know.

Mad. Ravish! — bagatelle. I would fain see one impudent rogue ravish Mademoiselle; *oui, je le voudrais.*

Lady Fan. Oh, but my reputation, Mademoiselle, my reputation; *ah, ma chère réputation!*

Mad. Matam, *quand on l'a une fois perdue, on n'en est plus embarrassée.*

Lady Fan. Fie, Mademoiselle, fie! Reputation is a jewel.

Mad. *Qui coûte bien cher*, matam.

Lady Fan. Why, sure you would not sacrifice your honor to your pleasure?

Mad. *Je suis philosophe.*

Lady Fan. Bless me, how you talk! Why, what if honor be a burden, Mademoiselle, must it not be borne?

Mad. *Chacun à sa façon.* — *Quand quelque chose m'incommode moi,* — *je m'en défais, vite.*

Lady Fan. Get you gone, you little naughty Frenchwoman you! I vow and swear I must turn you out of doors, if you talk thus.

Mad. Turn me out of doors! — turn yourself out of doors, and go see what de gentleman have to say to you. — *Tenez.* — *Voilà* (*giving her her things hastily*) *votre écharpe, voilà votre coiffe, voilà votre masque, voilà tout.* — (*Calling within.*) *Hé, Mercure, coquin!* call one chair for matam, and one oder for me; *va-t'en vite.* — (*Turning to her Lady, and helping her on hastily with her things.*) *Allons*, matam; *dépêchez-vous donc. Mon Dieu, quels scrupules!*

Lady Fan. Well, for once, Mademoiselle, I'll follow your advice, out of the intemperate desire I have to know who this ill-bred fellow is. But I have too much *délicatesse* to make a practice on it.

Mad. *Belle chose vraiment que la délicatesse, lorsqu'il s'agit de se divertir!* — *Ah, ça* — *Vous voilà équipée; partons.* — *Hé bien!* — *qu'avez vous donc?*

Lady Fan. *J'ai peur.*

Mad. *Je n'en ai point moi.*

Lady Fan. I dare not go.

Mad. *Démeurez donc.*

Lady Fan. *Je suis poltronné.*

Mad. *Tant pis pour vous.*

Lady Fan. Curiosity's a wicked devil.

Mad. *C'est une charmante sainte.*

Lady Fan. It ruined our first parents.

Mad. *Elle a bien diverti leurs enfants.*

Lady Fan. *L'honneur est contre.*

Mad. *Le plaisir est pour.*

Lady Fan. Must I then go?

Mad. Must you go? — must you eat, must you drink, must you sleep, must you live? De nature bid you do one, de nature bid you do toder. *Vous me ferez enrager!*

Lady Fan. But when reason corrects nature, Mademoiselle?

Mad. *Elle est donc bien insolente, c'est sa sœur aînée.*

Lady Fan. Do you then prefer your nature to your reason, Mademoiselle?

Mad. *Oui dà.*

Lady Fan. *Pourquoi?*

Mad. Because my nature make me merry, my reason make me mad.

Lady Fan. *Ah, la méchante Française!*

Mad. *Ah, la belle Anglaise!*

([*Exit*,] *forcing her Lady off.*)

ACT II.

Scene [I.] — *St. James's Park*

(*Enter* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.)

Lady Fan. Well, I vow, Mademoiselle, I'm strangely impatient to know who this confident fellow is.

(*Enter* Heartfree.)

Look, there's Heartfree. But sure it can't be him; he's a professed woman-hater. Yet who knows what my wicked eyes may have done?

Mad. *Il nous approche, madame.*

Lady Fan. Yes, 'tis he. Now will he be most intolerably cavalier, though he should be in love with me.

Heart. Madam, I'm your humble servant; I perceive you have more humility and good-nature than I thought you had.

Lady Fan. What you attribute to humility and good-nature, sir, may perhaps be only due to curiosity. I had a mind to know who 'twas had ill-manners enough to write that letter.

(*Throwing him his letter.*)

Heart. Well, and now, I hope, you are satisfied.

Lady Fan. I am so, sir; good b'w'y to ye.

Heart. Nay, hold there; though you have done your business, I han't done mine; by your ladyship's leave, we must have one moment's prattle together. Have you a mind to be the prettiest woman about town, or not? — How she stares upon me! — What! this passes for an impertinent question with you now, because you think you are so already?

Lady Fan. Pray, sir, let me ask you a question in my turn: by what right do you pretend to examine me?

Heart. By the same right that the strong govern the weak, because I have you in my power; for you cannot get so quickly to your coach, but I shall have time enough to make you hear everything I have to say to you.

Lady Fan. These are strange liberties you take, Mr. Heartfree.

Heart. They are so, madam, but there's no help for it; for know, that I have a design upon you.

Lady Fan. Upon me, sir!

Heart. Yes; and one that will turn to your glory and my comfort, if you will but be a little wiser than you use to be.

Lady Fan. Very well, sir.

Heart. Let me see, — your vanity, madam, I take to be about some eight degrees higher than any woman's in the town, let t'other be who she will; and my indifference is naturally about the same pitch. Now, could you find the way to turn this indifference into fire and flames, methinks your vanity ought to be satisfied; and this, perhaps, you might bring about upon pretty reasonable terms.

Lady Fan. And pray at what rate would this indifference be bought off, if one should have so depraved an appetite to desire it?

Heart. Why, madam, to drive a quaker's bargain, and make but one word with you, if I do part with it, — you must lay me down — your affectation.

Lady Fan. My affectation, sir!

Heart. Why, I ask you nothing but what you may very well spare.

Lady Fan. You grow rude, sir. — Come, Mademoiselle, 'tis high time to be gone.

Mad. *Allons, allons, allons!*

Heart. (*stopping 'em*). Nay, you may as well stand still; for hear me you shall, walk which way you please.

Lady Fan. What mean you, sir?

Heart. I mean to tell you, that you are the most ungrateful woman upon earth.

Lady Fan. Ungrateful! To who?

Heart. To nature.

Lady Fan. Why, what has nature done for me?

Heart. What you have undone by art. It made you handsome; it gave you beauty to a miracle, a shape without a fault, wit enough to make 'em relish, and so turned you loose to your own discretion; which has made such work with you, that you are become the pity of our sex, and the jest of your own. There is not a feature in your face but you have found the way to teach it some affected convulsion; your feet, your hands, your very fingers' ends, are directed never to move without some ridiculous air or other; and your language is a suitable trumpet, to draw people's eyes upon the raree-show.

Mad. (*aside*). *Est-ce qu'on fait l'amour en Angleterre comme ça?*

Lady Fan. (*aside*). Now could I cry for madness, but that I know he'd laugh at me for it.

Heart. Now do you hate me for telling you the truth; but that's because you don't believe it is so; for were you once convinced of that, you'd reform for your own sake. But 'tis as hard to persuade a woman to quit anything that makes her ridiculous, as 'tis to prevail with a poet to see a fault in his own play.

Lady Fan. Every circumstance of nice breeding must needs appear ridiculous to one who has so natural an antipathy to good manners.

Heart. But suppose I could find the means to convince you, that the whole world is of my opinion, and that those who flatter and commend you, do it to no other intent, but to make you persevere in your folly, that they may continue in their mirth.

Lady Fan. Sir, though you and all that world you talk of should be so impertinently officious as to think to persuade me I don't know how to behave myself, I should still have charity enough for my own understanding to believe myself in the right, and all you in the wrong.

MAD. *Le voilà mort!*

(*Exeunt* LADY FANC[YFUL] *and* MADEMOISELLE.)

HEART. (*gazing after her*). There her single clapper has published the sense of the whole sex. Well, this once I have endeavored to wash the blackamoor white; but henceforward I'll sooner undertake to teach sincerity to a courtier, generosity to an usurer, honesty to a lawyer, nay, humility to a divine, than discretion to a woman I see has once set her heart upon playing the fool.

(*Enter* CONSTANT.)

'Morrow, Constant.

CONST. Good morrow, Jack; what are you doing here this morning?

HEART. Doing! guess, if thou canst. Why, I have been endeavoring to persuade my lady Fancyful that she's the foolishest woman about town.

CONST. A pretty endeavor truly!

HEART. I have told her in as plain English as I could speak, both what the town says of her, and what I think of her. In short, I have used her as an absolute king would do Magna Charta.

CONST. And how does she take it?

HEART. As children do pills; bite 'em, but can't swallow 'em.

CONST. But, prithee, what has put it into your head, of all mankind, to turn reformer?

HEART. Why, one thing was, the morning hung upon my hands, I did not know what to do with myself. And another was, that as little as I care for women, I could not see with patience one that Heaven had taken such wondrous pains about, be so very industrious to make herself the jack-pudding of the creation.

CONST. Well, now could I almost wish to see my cruel mistress make the self-same use of what Heaven has done for her, that so I might be cured of a disease that makes me so very uneasy; for love, love is the devil, Heartfree.

HEART. And why do you let the devil govern you?

CONST. Because I have more flesh and blood than grace and self-denial. My dear, dear mistress, — 'sdeath! that so genteel a woman should be a saint, when religion's out of fashion!

HEART. Nay, she's much in the wrong truly; but who knows how far time and good example may prevail?

CONST. Oh! they have played their parts in vain already. 'Tis now two years since that damned fellow her husband invited me to his wedding: and there was the first time I saw that charming woman, whom I have loved ever since, more than e'er a martyr did his soul; but she's cold, my friend, still cold as the northern star.

HEART. So are all women by nature, which makes 'em so willing to be warmed.

CONST. Oh, don't profane the sex! Prithee think 'em all angels for her sake, for she's virtuous, even to a fault.

HEART. A lover's head is a good accountable thing truly; he adores his mistress for being virtuous, and yet is very angry with her because she won't be lewd.

CONST. Well, the only relief I expect in my misery is to see thee some day or other as deeply engaged as myself, which will force me to be merry in the midst of all my misfortunes.

HEART. That day will never come, be assured, Ned. Not but that I can pass a night with a woman, and for the time, perhaps, make myself as good sport as you can do. Nay, I can court a woman too, call her nymph, angel, goddess, what you please; but here's the difference 'twixt you and I: I persuade a woman she's an angel; she persuades you she's one. Prithee let me tell you how I avoid falling in love; that which serves me for prevention, may chance to serve you for a cure.

CONST. Well, use the ladies moderately then, and I'll hear you.

HEART. That using 'em moderately undoes us all; but I'll use 'em justly, and that you ought to be satisfied with. I always consider a woman, not as the tailor, the shoemaker, the tire-woman, the sempstress, and (which is more than all that) the poet makes her; but I consider her as pure nature has contrived her, and that more strictly than I should have done our old grandmother Eve, had I seen her naked in the garden; for I consider her turned inside out. Her heart well-examined, I find there pride, vanity, covetousness, indiscretion, but above all things, malice; plots eternally a-forging to destroy one another's reputations, and as honestly to charge the levity of men's tongues with the scandal; hourly debates how to make poor gentlemen in love with 'em, with no other intent but to use 'em like dogs when they have done; a constant desire of doing more mischief, and an everlasting war waged against truth and good-nature.

Const. Very well, sir; an admirable composition truly!

Heart. Then for her outside, I consider it merely as an outside; she has a thin tiffany covering over just such stuff as you and I are made on. As for her motion, her mien, her airs, and all those tricks, I know they affect you mightily. If you should see your mistress at a coronation, dragging her peacock's train, with all her state and insolence about her, 'twould strike you with all the awful thoughts that heaven itself could pretend to from you; whereas I turn the whole matter into a jest, and suppose her strutting in the self-same stately manner, with nothing on but her stays, and her under scanty quilted petticoat.

Const. Hold thy profane tongue, for I'll hear no more.

Heart. What! you'll love on then?

Const. Yes, to eternity.

Heart. Yet you have no hopes at all.

Const. None.

Heart. Nay, the resolution may be discreet enough; perhaps you have found out some new philosophy, that love's like virtue, its own reward: so you and your mistress will be as well content at a distance, as others that have less learning are in coming together.

Const. No; but if she should prove kind at last, my dear Heartfree (*Embracing him.*)

Heart. Nay, prithee, don't take me for your mistress, for lovers are very troublesome.

Const. Well, who knows what time may do?

Heart. — And just now he was sure time could do nothing.

Const. Yet not one kind glance in two years is somewhat strange.

Heart. Not strange at all; she don't like you, that's all the business.

Const. Prithee, don't distract me.

Heart. Nay, you are a good handsome young fellow, she might use you better. Come, will you go see her? Perhaps she may have changed her mind; there's some hopes as long as she's a woman.

Const. Oh, 'tis in vain to visit her: sometimes to get a sight of her I visit that beast her husband, but she certainly finds some pretence to quit the room as soon as I enter.

Heart. It's much she don't tell him you have made love to her too, for that's another good-natured thing usual amongst women, in which they have several ends. Sometimes 'tis to recommend their virtue, that they may be lewd with the greater security. Sometimes 'tis to make their husbands fight, in hopes they may be killed, when their affairs require it should be so. But most commonly 'tis to engage two men in a quarrel, that they may have the credit of being fought for; and if the lover's killed in the business, they cry, *Poor fellow, he had ill luck!* — And so they go to cards.

Const. Thy injuries to women are not to be forgiven. Look to't, if ever thou dost fall into their hands —

Heart. They can't use me worse than they do you, that speak well of 'em. — O ho! here comes the knight.

(*Enter* Sir John Brute.)

Heart. Your humble servant, Sir John.

Sir John. Servant, sir.

Heart. How does all your family?

Sir John. Pox o' my family!

Const. How does your lady? I han't seen her abroad a good while.

Sir John. Do! I don't know how she does, not I; she was well enough yesterday: I han't been at home to-night.

Const. What! were you out of town?

Sir John. Out of town! no, I was drinking.

Const. You are a true Englishman; don't know your own happiness. If I were married to such a woman, I would not be from her a night for all the wine in France.

Sir John. Not from her! — Oons, — what a time should a man have of that!

Heart. Why, there's no division, I hope?

Sir John. No; but there's a conjunction, and that's worse; a pox o' the parson! — Why the plague don't you two marry? I fancy I look like the devil to you.

Heart. Why, you don't think you have horns, do you?

Sir John. No; I believe my wife's religion will keep her honest.

Heart. And what will make her keep her religion?

Sir John. Persecution; and therefore she shall have it.

Heart. Have a care, knight, women are tender things.

Sir John. And yet, methinks, 'tis a hard matter to break their hearts.

Const. Fie, fie! you have one of the best wives in the world, and yet you seem the most uneasy husband.

Sir John. Best wives! — the woman's well enough, she has no vice that I know of, but she's a wife, and — damn a wife! If I were married to a hogshead of claret, matrimony would make me hate it.

Heart. Why did you marry, then? you were old enough to know your own mind.

Sir John. Why did I marry! I married because I had a mind to lie with her, and she would not let me.

Heart. Why did not you ravish her?

Sir John. Yes! and so have hedged myself into forty quarrels with her relations, besides buying my pardon. But more than all that, you must know, I was afraid of being damned in those days; for I kept sneaking cowardly company, fellows that went to church, said grace to their meat, and had not the least tincture of quality about 'em.

Heart. But I think you are got into a better gang now.

Sir John. Zoons, sir, my lord Rake and I are hand and glove; I believe we may get our bones broke together tonight; have you a mind to share a frolic?

Const. Not I, truly; my talent lies to softer exercises.

Sir John. What? a down-bed and a strumpet? A pox of venery, I say. Will you come and drink with me this afternoon?

Const. I can't drink to-day, but we'll come and sit an hour with you if you will.

Sir John. Phugh! pox, sit an hour! Why can't you drink?

Const. Because I'm to see my mistress.

Sir John. Who's that?

Const. Why, do you use to tell?

Sir John. Yes.

Const. So won't I.

Sir John. Why?

Const. Because 'tis a secret.

Sir John. Would my wife knew it, 'twould be no secret long.

Const. Why, do you think she can't keep a secret?

Sir John. No more than she can keep Lent.

Heart. Prithee, tell it her to try, Constant.

Sir John. No, prithee, don't, that I mayn't be plagued with it.

Const. I'll hold you a guinea you don't make her tell it you.

Sir John. I'll hold you a guinea I do.

Const. Which way?

Sir John. Why, I'll beg her not to tell it me.

Heart. Nay, if anything does it, that will.

Const. But do you think, sir —

Sir John. Oons, sir, I think a woman and a secret are the two impertinentest themes in the universe. Therefore, pray let's hear no more of my wife nor your mistress. Damn 'em both with all my heart, and everything else that daggles a petticoat, except four generous whores, with Betty Sands at the head of 'em, who are drunk with my lord Rake and I ten times in a fortnight.

(*Exit* Sir John.)

Const. Here's a dainty fellow for you! And the veriest coward too. But his usage of his wife makes me ready to stab the villain.

Heart. Lovers are short-sighted: all their senses run into that of feeling. This proceeding of his is the only thing on earth can make your fortune. If anything can prevail with her to accept of a gallant, 'tis his ill-usage of her; for women will do more for revenge than they'll do for the gospel. Prithee take heart, I have great hopes for you; and since I can't bring you quite off of her, I'll endeavor to bring you quite on; for a whining lover is the damned'st companion upon earth.

Const. My dear friend, flatter me a little more with these hopes; for whilst they prevail, I have heaven within me, and could melt with joy.

Heart. Pray, no melting yet: let things go farther first. This afternoon perhaps we shall make some advance. In the meanwhile, let's go dine at Locket's, and let hope get you a stomach. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene [II.] — Lady Fancyful's *house*

(*Enter* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.)

Lady Fan. Did you ever see anything so importune, Mademoiselle?

Mad. Inteed, matam, to say de trute, he want leetel good-breeding.

Lady Fan. Good-breeding! he wants to be caned, Mademoiselle: an insolent fellow! And yet let me expose my weakness, 'tis the only man on earth I could resolve to dispense my favors on, were he but a fine gentleman. Well, did men but know how deep an impression a fine gentleman makes in a lady's heart, they would reduce all their studies to that of good-breeding alone.

(*Enter* Cornet.)

Cor. Madam, here's Mr. Treble. He has brought home the verses your ladyship made, and gave him to set.

Lady Fan. O let him come in by all means. — [*Exit* Cornet.] Now, Mademoiselle, am I going to be unspeakably happy.

(*Enter* Treble [*and* Pipe].)

So, Mr. Treble, you have set my little dialogue?

Treb. Yes, madam, and I hope your ladyship will be pleased with it.

Lady Fan. Oh, no doubt on't; for really, Mr. Treble, you set all things to a wonder. But your music is in particular heavenly, when you have my words to clothe in't.

Treb. Your words themselves, madam, have so much music in 'em, they inspire me.

Lady Fan. Nay, now you make me blush, Mr. Treble; but pray let's hear what you have done.

Treb. You shall, madam.

A Song to be Sung between a Man and a Woman.

M. Ah, lovely nymph, the world's on fire:
Veil, veil those cruel eyes!
W. The world may then in flames expire,
And boast that so it dies.
M. But when all mortals are destroy'd,
Who then shall sing your praise?
W. Those who are fit to be employed:
The gods shall altars raise.

Treb. How does your ladyship like it, madam?

Lady Fan. Rapture, rapture, Mr. Treble, I'm all rapture! O wit and art, what power you have when joined! I must needs tell you the birth of this little dialogue, Mr. Treble. Its father was a dream, and its mother was the moon. I dreamt that by an unanimous vote, I was chosen queen of that pale world. And that the first time I appeared upon my throne — all my subjects fell in love with me. Just then I waked, and seeing pen, ink, and paper lie idle upon the table, I slid into my morning-gown, and writ this impromptu.

Treb. So I guess the dialogue, madam, is supposed to be between your majesty and your first minister of state.

Lady Fan. Just. He as minister advises me to trouble my head about the welfare of my subjects; which I as sovereign find a very impertinent proposal. But is the town so dull, Mr. Treble, it affords us never another new song?

TREB. Madam, I have one in my pocket, came out but yesterday, if your ladyship pleases to let Mrs. Pipe sing it.

LADY FAN. By all means. — Here, Pipe, make what music you can of this song, here.

SONG.

I.

Not an angel dwells above
Half so fair as her I love:
  Heaven knows how she'll receive me:
If she smiles, I'm blest indeed;
If she frowns, I'm quickly freed;
  Heaven knows, she ne'er can grieve me.

II.

None can love her more than I,
Yet she ne'er shall make me die.
  If my flame can never warm her,
Lasting beauty I'll adore;
I shall never love her more,
  Cruelty will so deform her.

LADY FAN. Very well. This is Heartfree's poetry, without question.

TREB. Won't your ladyship please to sing yourself this morning?

LADY FAN. O Lord, Mr. Treble, my cold is still so barbarous to refuse me that pleasure. He, he, hem.

TREB. I'm very sorry for it, madam. Methinks all mankind should turn physicians for the cure on't.

LADY FAN. Why truly, to give mankind their due, there's few that know me, but have offered their remedy.

TREB. They have reason, madam; for I know nobody sings so near a cherubin as your ladyship.

LADY FAN. What I do, I owe chiefly to your skill and care, Mr. Treble. People do flatter me, indeed, that I have a voice, and a *je-ne-sais-quoi* in the conduct of it, that will make music of anything. And truly I begin to believe so, since what happened t'other night. Would you think it, Mr. Treble? walking pretty late in the Park, (for I often walk late in the Park, Mr. Treble) a whim took me to sing Chevy Chase, and would you believe it? next morning I had three copies of verses and six billets-doux at my levee upon it.

TREB. And without all dispute you deserved as many more, madam. Are there any further commands for your ladyship's humble servant?

LADY FAN. Nothing more at this time, Mr. Treble. But I shall expect you here every morning for this month, to sing my little matter there to me. I'll reward you for your pains.

TREB. O Lord, madam —

LADY FAN. Good morrow, sweet Mr. Treble.

TREB. Your ladyship's most obedient servant. (*Exit* TREB. [*with* PIPE].)

(*Enter Servant.*)

SERV. Will your ladyship please to dine yet?

LADY FAN. Yes, let 'em serve. — (*Exit Servant.*) Sure this Heartfree has bewitched me, Mademoiselle. You can't imagine how oddly he mixed himself in my thoughts during my rapture e'en now. I vow 'tis a thousand pities he is not more polished. Don't you think so?

MAD. Matam, I tink it so great pity, dat if I was in your ladyship place, I take him home in my house, I lock him up in my closet, and I never let him go till I teach him everyting dat fine laty expect from fine gentleman.

LADY FAN. Why truly I believe I should soon subdue his brutality; for without doubt, he has a strange penchant to grow fond of me, in spite of his aversion to the sex, else he would ne'er have taken so much pains about me. Lord, how proud would some poor creatures be of such a conquest! But I, alas, I don't know how to receive as a favor what I take to be so infinitely my due. But what shall I do to new-mould him, Mademoiselle? for till then he's my utter aversion.

MAD. Matam, you must laugh at him in all de place dat you meet him, and turn into de ridicule all he say and all he do.

LADY FAN. Why truly, satire has ever been of wondrous use to reform ill-manners. Besides, 'tis my particular talent to ridicule folks. I can be severe, strangely severe, when I will, Mademoiselle. — Give me the pen and ink — I find myself whimsical — I'll write to him. (*Sitting down to write.*) — Or I'll let it alone, and be severe upon him that way. (*Rising up again.*) — Yet active severity is better than passive. (*Sitting down.*) — 'Tis as good let alone too; for every lash I give him perhaps he'll take for a favor. (*Rising.*) — Yet 'tis a thousand pities so much satire should be lost. (*Sitting.*) — But if it should have a wrong effect upon him, 'twould distract me. (*Rising.*) — Well, I must write, though, after all. (*Sitting.*) — Or I'll let it alone, which is the same thing. (*Rising.*)

Mad. (*aside*). *La voilà déterminée.*

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT III.

Scene [I.] *opens.* — [Sir John Brute's *house.*]

(Sir John, Lady Brute, *and* Belinda *rising from the table.*)

Sir John (*to a Servant*). Here, take away the things: I expect company. But first bring me a pipe; I'll smoke.

Lady B. Lord, Sir John, I wonder you won't leave that nasty custom.

Sir John. Prithee don't be impertinent.

Bel. (*to* Lady Brute). I wonder who those are he expects this afternoon?

Lady B. I'd give the world to know. Perhaps 'tis Constant; he comes here sometimes; if it does prove him, I'm resolved I'll share the visit.

Bel. We'll send for our work and sit here.

Lady B. He'll choke us with his tobacco.

Bel. Nothing will choke us, when we are doing what we have a mind to. — Lovewell!

(*Enter* Lovewell.)

Love. Madam.

Lady B. Here; bring my cousin's work and mine hither.

(*Exit* Lovewell, *and re-enters with their work; then exit.*)

Sir John. Whu! Pox! can't you work somewhere else?

Lady B. We shall be careful not to disturb you, sir.

Bel. Your pipe will make you too thoughtful, uncle, if you were left alone; our prittle-prattle will cure your spleen.

Sir John. Will it so, Mrs. Pert? Now I believe it will so increase it, (*sitting and smoking*) I shall take my own house for a paper-mill.

Lady B. (*to* Belinda *aside*). Don't let's mind him; let him say what he will.

Sir John. A woman's tongue a cure for the spleen — oons! — (*Aside.*) If a man had got the headache, they'd be for applying the same remedy.

Lady B. You have done a great deal, Belinda, since yesterday.

Bel. Yes, I have worked very hard; how do you like it?

Lady B. Oh, 'tis the prettiest fringe in the world! Well, cousin, you have the happiest fancy. Prithee advise me about altering my crimson petticoat.

Sir John. A pox o' your petticoat! here's such a prating, a man can't digest his own thoughts for you.

Lady B. (*aside*). Don't answer him. — Well, what do you advise me?

Bel. Why, really I would not alter it at all. Methinks 'tis very pretty as it is.

Lady B. Ay, that's true: but you know one grows weary of the prettiest things in the world, when one has had 'em long.

Sir John. Yes, I have taught her that.

Bel. [*aside*]. Shall we provoke him a little?

Lady B. With all my heart. — Belinda, don't you long to be married?

Bel. Why there are some things in't I could like well enough.

Lady B. What do you think you should dislike?

Bel. My husband, a hundred to one else.

Lady B. O ye wicked wretch! Sure you don't speak as you think.

Bel. Yes, I do: especially if he smoked

tobacco. (*He looks earnestly at 'em.*)

Lady B. Why, that many times takes off worse smells.

Bel. Then he must smell very ill indeed.

Lady B. So some men will, to keep their wives from coming near 'em.

Bel. Then those wives should cuckold 'em at a distance.

(*He rises in a fury, throws his pipe at 'em, and drives 'em out. As they run off,* Constant *and* Heartfree *enter.* Lady Brute *runs against* Constant.)

Sir John. Oons, get you gone up stairs, you confederating strumpets you, or I'll cuckold you with a vengeance!

Lady B. O Lord, he'll beat us, he'll beat us! — Dear, dear Mr. Constant, save us! [*Exit with* Belinda.]

Sir John. I'll cuckold you with a pox!

Const. Heavens, Sir John! what's the matter?

Sir John. Sure, if woman had been ready created, the devil, instead of being kicked down into hell, had been married.

Heart. Why, what new plague have you found now?

Sir John. Why, these two gentlewomen did but hear me say, I expected you here this afternoon; upon which they presently resolved to take up the room, o' purpose to plague me and my friends.

Const. Was that all? Why, we should have been glad of their company.

Sir John. Then I should have been weary of yours. For I can't relish both together. They found fault with my smoking tobacco too; and said men stunk. But I have a good mind — to say something.

Const. No, nothing against the ladies, pray.

Sir John. Split the ladies! Come, will you sit down? — [*To a Servant.*] Give us some wine, fellow. — You won't smoke?

Const. No, nor drink neither at this time, I must ask your pardon.

Sir John. What, this mistress of yours runs in your head; I'll warrant it's some such squeamish minx as my wife, that's grown so dainty of late, she finds fault even with a dirty shirt.

Heart. That a woman may do, and not be very dainty neither.

Sir John. Pox o' the women! let's drink. Come, you shall take one glass, though I send for a box of lozenges to sweeten your mouth after it.

Const. Nay, if one glass will satisfy you, I'll drink it, without putting you to that expense.

Sir John. Why, that's honest. — Fill some wine, sirrah! — So, here's to you, gentlemen! — A wife's the devil. To your being both married! (*They drink.*)

Heart. Oh, your most humble servant, sir.

Sir John. Well, how do you like my wine?

Const. 'Tis very good indeed.

Heart. 'Tis admirable.

Sir John. Then give us t'other glass.

Const. No, pray excuse us now. We'll come another time, and then we won't spare it.

Sir John. This one glass and no more. Come, it shall be your mistress's health: and that's a great compliment from me, I assure you.

Const. And 'tis a very obliging one to me: so give us the glasses.

Sir John. So: let her live!

Heart. And be kind.

(Sir John *coughs in the glass.*)

Const. What's the matter? does't go the wrong way?

Sir John. If I had love enough to be jealous, I should take this for an ill omen: for I never drank my wife's health in my life, but I puked in the glass.

Const. Oh, she's too virtuous to make a reasonable man jealous.

Sir John. Pox of her virtue! If I could but catch her adulterating, I might be divorced from her by law.

Heart. And so pay her a yearly pension, to be a distinguished cuckold.

(*Enter Servant.*)

Serv. Sir, there's my lord Rake, Colonel Bully, and some other gentlemen at the Blue-Posts, desire your company. [*Exit.*]

Sir John. Cod's so, we are to consult about playing the devil to-night.

HEART. Well, we won't hinder business.

SIR JOHN. Methinks I don't know how to leave you though. But for once I must make bold. Or look you: maybe the conference mayn't last long; so if you'll wait here half an hour, or an hour; if I don't come then — why then — I won't come at all.

HEART. (*to* CONST.). A good modest proposition truly!

CONST. [*to* HEART.]. But let's accept on't, however. Who knows what may happen?

HEART. Well, sir, to show you how fond we are of your company, we'll expect your return as long as we can.

SIR JOHN. Nay, maybe I mayn't stay at all: but business, you know, must be done. So your servant — or, hark you, if you have a mind to take a frisk with us, I have an interest with my lord, I can easily introduce you.

CONST. We are much beholding to you, but for my part I'm engaged another way.

SIR JOHN. What? to your mistress, I'll warrant! Prithee leave your nasty punk to entertain herself with her own lewd thoughts, and make one with us to-night.

CONST. Sir, 'tis business that is to employ me.

HEART. And me; and business must be done, you know.

SIR JOHN. Ay, women's business, though the world were consumed for't.

(*Exit* SIR JOHN.)

CONST. Farewell, beast! — And now, my dear friend, would my mistress be but as complaisant as some men's wives, who think it a piece of good-breeding to receive the visits of their husband's friends in his absence!

HEART. Why, for your sake I could forgive her, though she should be so complaisant to receive something else in his absence. But what way shall we invent to see her?

CONST. Oh, ne'er hope it: invention will prove as vain as wishes.

(*Enter* LADY BRUTE *and* BELINDA.)

HEART. [*aside to* CONST.]. What do you think now, friend?

CONST. [*aside*]. I think I shall swoon.

HEART. [*aside*]. I'll speak first then, whilst you fetch breath.

LADY B. We think ourselves obliged, gentlemen, to come and return you thanks for your knight-errantry. We were just upon being devoured by the fiery dragon.

BEL. Did not his fumes almost knock you down, gentlemen?

HEART. Truly, ladies, we did undergo some hardships, and should have done more, if some greater heroes than ourselves hard by had not diverted him.

CONST. Though I'm glad of the service you are pleased to say we have done you, yet I'm sorry we could do it no other way than by making ourselves privy to what you would perhaps have kept a secret.

LADY B. For Sir John's part, I suppose he designed it no secret, since he made so much noise. And, for myself, truly I am not much concerned, since 'tis fallen only into this gentleman's hands and yours; who, I have many reasons to believe, will neither interpret nor report anything to my disadvantage.

CONST. Your good opinion, madam, was what I feared I never could have merited.

LADY B. Your fears were vain then, sir; for I am just to everybody.

HEART. Prithee, Constant, what is't you do to get the ladies' good opinions? for I'm a novice at it.

BEL. Sir, will you give me leave to instruct you?

HEART. Yes, that I will with all my soul, madam.

BEL. Why then, you must never be slovenly, never be out of humor, fare well, and cry roast-meat; smoke tobacco, nor drink but when you are a-dry.

HEART. That's hard.

CONST. Nay, if you take his bottle from him, you break his heart, madam.

BEL. Why, is it possible the gentleman can love drinking?

HEART. Only by way of antidote.

BEL. Against what, pray?

HEART. Against love, madam.

LADY B. Are you afraid of being in love, sir?

Heart. I should, if there were any danger of it.

Lady B. Pray, why so?

Heart. Because I always had an aversion to being used like a dog.

Bel. Why truly, men in love are seldom used better.

Lady B. But was you never in love, sir?

Heart. No, I thank Heaven, madam.

Bel. Pray, where got you your learning, then?

Heart. From other people's expense.

Bel. That's being a spunger, sir, which is scarce honest. If you'd buy some experience with your own money, as 'twould be fairlier got, so 'twould stick longer by you.

(*Enter Footman.*)

Foot. Madam, here's my lady Fancyful, to wait upon your ladyship. [*Exit.*]

Lady B. Shield me, kind Heaven! What an inundation of impertinence is here coming upon us!

(*Enter* Lady Fancyful, *who runs first to* Lady Brute, *then to* Belinda, *kissing 'em.*)

Lady Fan. My dear lady Brute, and sweet Belinda, methinks 'tis an age since I saw you.

Lady B. Yet 'tis but three days; sure you have passed your time very ill, it seems so long to you.

Lady Fan. Why really, to confess the truth to you, I am so everlastingly fatigued with the addresses of unfortunate gentlemen, that were it not for the extravagancy of the example, I should e'en tear out these wicked eyes with my own fingers, to make both myself and mankind easy. — What think you on't, Mr. Heartfree, for I take you to be my faithful adviser?

Heart. Why truly, madam, — I think — every project that is for the good of mankind ought to be encouraged.

Lady Fan. Then I have your consent, sir —

Heart. To do whatever you please, madam.

Lady Fan. You had a much more limited complaisance this morning, sir. — Would you believe it, ladies? the gentleman has been so exceeding generous, to tell me of above fifty faults, in less time than it was well possible for me to commit two of 'em.

Const. Why truly, madam, my friend there is apt to be something familiar with the ladies.

Lady Fan. He is indeed, sir; but he's wondrous charitable with it; he has had the goodness to design a reformation, even down to my fingers'-ends. — 'Twas thus, I think, sir, you'd have had 'em stand? (*Opening her fingers in an awkward manner.*) — My eyes too he did not like. How was't you would have directed 'em? Thus, I think. (*Staring at him.*) — Then there was something amiss in my gait too; I don't know well how 'twas; but as I take it, he would have had me walk like him. — Pray, sir, do me the favor to take a turn or two about the room, that the company may see you. — He's sullen, ladies, and won't. But, to make short, and give you as true an idea as I can of the matter, I think 'twas much about this figure in general he would have moulded me to: but I was an obstinate woman, and could not resolve to make myself mistress of his heart, by growing as awkward as his fancy.

(*She walks awkwardly about, staring and looking ungainly, then changes on a sudden to the extremity of her usual affectation.*)

Heart. Just thus women do, when they think we are in love with 'em, or when they are so with us.

(*Here* Constant *and* Lady Brute *talk together apart.*)

Lady Fan. 'Twould, however, be less vanity for me to conclude the former, than you the latter, sir.

Heart. Madam, all I shall presume to conclude is, that if I were in love, you'd find the means to make me soon weary on't.

Lady Fan. Not by over-fondness, upon my word, sir. — But pray let's stop here, for you are so much governed by instinct, I know you'll grow brutish at last.

Bel. (*aside*). Now am I sure she's fond of him: I'll try to make her jealous. — [*Aloud.*] Well, for my part, I should be glad to find somebody would be so free with me, that I might know my faults, and mend 'em.

Lady Fan. Then pray let me recommend this gentleman to you: I have known him some time, and will be surety for him, that upon a very limited encouragement on your side, you shall find an extended impudence on his.

Heart. I thank you, madam, for your recommendation; but hating idleness, I'm unwilling to enter into a place where I believe there would be nothing to do. I was fond of serving your ladyship, because I knew you'd find me constant employment.

Lady Fan. I told you he'd be rude, Belinda.

Bel. Oh, a little bluntness is a sign of honesty, which makes me always ready to pardon it. — So, sir, if you have no other exceptions to my service, but the fear of being idle in't, you may venture to list yourself: I shall find you work, I warrant you.

Heart. Upon those terms I engage, madam; and this (with your leave) I take for earnest.

(*Offering to kiss her hand.*)

Bel. Hold there, sir! I'm none of your earnest-givers. But if I'm well served, I give good wages, and pay punctually.

(Heart. *and* Bel. *seem to continue talking familiarly.*)

Lady Fan. (*aside*). I don't like this jesting between 'em. — Methinks the fool begins to look as if he were in earnest — but then he must be a fool indeed. — Lard, what a difference there is between me and her! (*Looking at* Bel. *scornfully.*) — How I should despise such a thing, if I were a man! — What a nose she has! — what a chin! — what a neck! — Then, her eyes! — and the worst kissing lips in the universe! — No, no, he can never like her, that's positive. — Yet I can't suffer 'em together any longer. — [*Aloud.*] Mr. Heartfree, do you know that you and I must have no quarrel for all this? — I can't forbear being a little severe now and then: but women, you know, may be allowed anything.

Heart. Up to a certain age, madam.

Lady Fan. Which I am not yet past, I hope.

Heart. (*aside*). Nor never will, I dare swear.

Lady Fan. (*to* Lady B.). Come, madam, will your ladyship be witness to our reconciliation?

Lady B. You agree then at last.

Heart. (*slightingly*). We forgive.

Lady Fan. (*aside*). That was a cold, ill-natured reply.

Lady B. Then there's no challenges sent between you?

Heart. Not from me, I promise. — (*Aside to* Constant.) But that's more than I'll do for her, for I know she can as well be damned as forbear writing to me.

Const. That I believe. But I think we had best be going, lest she should suspect something, and be malicious.

Heart. With all my heart.

Const. Ladies, we are your humble servants. I see Sir John is quite engaged, 'twould be in vain to expect him. — Come, Heartfree. (*Exit.*)

Heart. Ladies, your servant. — (*To* Bel.) I hope, madam, you won't forget our bargain; I'm to say what I please to you.

Bel. Liberty of speech entire, sir.

(*Exit* Heartfree.)

Lady Fan. (*aside*). Very pretty truly! — But how the blockhead went out, languishing at her; and not a look toward me! — Well, churchmen may talk, but miracles are not ceased. For 'tis more than natural, such a rude fellow as he, and such a little impertinent as she, should be capable of making a woman of my sphere uneasy. But I can bear her sight no longer — methinks she's grown ten times uglier than Cornet. I must go home, and study revenge. — (*To* Lady B.) Madam, your humble servant; I must take my leave.

Lady B. What, going already, madam?

Lady Fan. I must beg you'll excuse me this once; for really I have eighteen visits to return this afternoon: so you see I'm importuned by the women as well as the men.

Bel. (*aside*). And she's quits with 'em both.

Lady Fan. (*going*). Nay, you shan't go one step out of the room.

Lady B. Indeed I'll wait upon you down.

Lady Fan. No, sweet lady Brute, you know I swoon at ceremony.

Lady B. Pray give me leave.

Lady Fan. You know I won't.

Lady B. Indeed I must.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't.

Lady B. Indeed I will.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't.

Lady B. Indeed I will.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't. Indeed, indeed, indeed you shan't.

(*Exit* Lady Fan *running. They follow.*)

(*Re-enter* Lady Brute, *sola.*)

Lady B. This impertinent woman has put me out of humor for a fortnight. — What an agreeable moment has her foolish visit interrupted! — Lord, how like a torrent love flows into the heart when once the sluice of desire is opened! Good gods! what a pleasure there is in doing what we should not do!

(*Re-enter* Constant.)

Ha! here again?

Const. Though the renewing my visit may seem a little irregular, I hope I shall obtain your pardon for it, madam, when you know I only left the room, lest the lady who was here should have been so malicious in her remarks, as she's foolish in her conduct.

Lady B. He who has discretion enough to be tender of a woman's reputation, carries a virtue about him may atone for a great many faults.

Const. If it has a title to atone for any, its pretensions must needs be strongest where the crime is love. I therefore hope I shall be forgiven the attempt I have made upon your heart, since my enterprise has been a secret to all the world but yourself.

Lady B. Secrecy indeed in sins of this kind is an argument of weight to lessen the punishment, but nothing's a plea for a pardon entire, without a sincere repentance.

Const. If sincerity in repentance consists in sorrow for offending, no cloister ever enclosed so true a penitent as I should be. But I hope it cannot be reckoned an offence to love, where 'tis a duty to adore.

Lady B. 'Tis an offence, a great one, where it would rob a woman of all she ought to be adored for — her virtue.

Const. Virtue? — Virtue, alas, is no more like the thing that's called so, than 'tis like vice itself. Virtue consists in goodness, honor, gratitude, sincerity, and pity; and not in peevish, snarling, strait-laced chastity. True virtue, wheresoe'er it moves, still carries an intrinsic worth about it, and is in every place, and in each sex, of equal value. So is not continence, you see: that phantom of honor, which men in every age have so contemned, they have thrown it amongst the women to scrabble for.

Lady B. If it be a thing of so very little value, why do you so earnestly recommend it to your wives and daughters?

Const. We recommend it to our wives, madam, because we would keep 'em to ourselves; and to our daughters, because we would dispose of 'em to others.

Lady B. 'Tis then of some importance, it seems, since you can't dispose of 'em without it.

Const. That importance, madam, lies in the humor of the country, not in the nature of the thing.

Lady B. How do you prove that, sir?

Const. From the wisdom of a neighboring nation in a contrary practice. In monarchies things go by whimsy, but commonwealths weigh all things in the scale of reason.

Lady B. I hope we are not so very

light a people, to bring up fashions without some ground.

Const. Pray what does your ladyship think of a powdered coat for deep mourning?

Lady B. I think, sir, your sophistry has all the effect that you can reasonably expect it should have; it puzzles, but don't convince.

Const. I'm sorry for it.

Lady B. I'm sorry to hear you say so.

Const. Pray why?

Lady B. Because if you expected more from it, you have a worse opinion of my understanding than I desire you should have.

Const. (*aside*). I comprehend her: she would have me set a value upon her chastity, that I may think myself the more obliged to her when she makes me a present of it. — (*To her.*) I beg you will believe I did but rally, madam; I know you judge too well of right and wrong to be deceived by arguments like those. I hope you'll have so favorable an opinion of my understanding too, to believe the thing called virtue has worth enough with me to pass for an eternal obligation where'er 'tis sacrificed.

Lady B. It is, I think, so great a one, as nothing can repay.

Const. Yes; the making the man you love your everlasting debtor.

Lady B. When debtors once have borrowed all we have to lend, they are very apt to grow very shy of their creditors' company.

Const. That, madam, is only when they are forced to borrow of usurers, and not of a generous friend. Let us choose our creditors, and we are seldom so ungrateful to shun 'em.

Lady B. What think you of Sir John, sir? I wish as free choice.

Const. I think he's married, madam.

Lady B. Does marriage then exclude men from your rule of constancy?

Const. It does. Constancy's a brave, free, haughty, generous agent, that cannot buckle to the chains of wedlock. There's a poor sordid slavery in marriage, that turns the flowing tide of honor, and sinks us to the lowest ebb of infamy. 'Tis a corrupted soil; ill-nature, avarice, sloth, cowardice, and dirt, are all its product.

Lady B. Have you no exceptions to this general rule, as well as to t'other?

Const. Yes; I would (after all) be an exception to it myself, if you were free in power and will to make me so.

Lady B. Compliments are well placed, where 'tis impossible to lay hold on 'em.

Const. I would to heaven 'twere possible for you to lay hold on mine, that you might see it is no compliment at all. But since you are already disposed o[f] beyond redemption, to one who does not know the value of the jewel you have put into his hands, I hope you would not think him greatly wronged, though it should sometimes be looked on by a friend, who knows how to esteem it as he ought.

Lady B. If looking on't alone would serve his turn, the wrong perhaps might not be very great.

Const. Why, what if he should wear it now and then a day, so he gave good security to bring it home again at night?

Lady B. Small security I fancy might serve for that. One might venture to take his word.

Const. Then where's the injury to the owner?

Lady B. 'Tis injury to him, if he think it one. For if happiness be seated in the mind, unhappiness must be so too.

Const. Here I close with you, madam, and draw my conclusive argument from your own position: if the injury lie in the fancy, there needs nothing but secrecy to prevent the wrong.

Lady B. (*going*). A surer way to prevent it, is to hear no more arguments in its behalf.

Const. (*following her*). But, madam —

Lady B. But, sir, 'tis my turn to be discreet now, and not suffer too long a visit.

Const. (*catching her hand*). By heaven you shall not stir, till you give me hopes that I shall see you again, at some more convenient time and place!

Lady B. I give you just hopes enough (*breaking from him*) to get loose from you: and that's all I can afford you at this time.

(*Exit running.*)

Const. (*solus*). Now by all that's great and good, she is a charming woman! In what ecstasy of joy she has left me! For she gave me hope; did she not say she gave me hope? — Hope! ay; what hope? —enough to make me let her go! — Why that's enough in conscience. Or, no matter how 'twas spoke; hope was the word: it came from her, and it was said to me.

(*Enter* Heartfree.)

Ha, Heartfree! Thou hast done me noble service in prattling to the young gentlewoman without there; come to my arms, thou venerable bawd, and let me squeeze thee (*embracing him eagerly*) as a new pair of stays does a fat country girl, when she's carried to court to stand for a maid of honor.

Heart. Why, what the devil's all this rapture for?

Const. Rapture! There's ground for rapture, man; there's hopes, my Heartfree, hopes, my friend!

Heart. Hopes! of what?

Const. Why, hopes that my lady and I together (for 'tis more than one body's work) should make Sir John a cuckold.

Heart. Prithee, what did she say to thee?

Const. Say? what did she not say? She said that — says she — she said — zoons, I don't know what she said: but she looked as if she said everything I'd have her; and so if thou'lt go to the tavern, I'll treat thee with anything that gold can buy; I'll give all my silver amongst the drawers, make a bonfire before the door, say the plenipos have signed the peace, and the Bank of England's grown honest.

(*Exeunt.*)

Scene [II.] *opens.* — [*The Blue Posts.*]

(Lord Rake, Sir John, [Colonel Bully,] *&c. at a table, drinking.*)

All. Huzza!

Lord R. Come, boys, charge again. — So. — Confusion to all order! Here's liberty of conscience!

All. Huzza!

Lord R. I'll sing you a song I made this morning to this purpose.

Sir John. 'Tis wicked, I hope.

Col. B. Don't my lord tell you he made it?

Sir John. Well then, let's ha't.

Lord Rake *sings.*

I.

What a pother of late
Have they kept in the state
After setting our consciences free!
A bottle has more
Dispensations in store,
Than the king and the state can decree.

II.

When my head's full of wine,
I o'erflow with design,
And know no penal laws that can curb me.
Whate'er I devise
Seems good in my eyes,
And religion ne'er dares to disturb me.

III.

No saucy remorse
Intrudes in my course,
Nor impertinent notions of evil,
So there's claret in store,
In peace I've my whore,
And in peace I jog on to the devil.

All sing. So there's claret, &c.

Lord R. (*rep.*).

And in peace I jog on to the devil.

Lord R. Well, how do you like it, gentlemen?

All. Oh, admirable!

Sir John. I would not give a fig for a song that is not full of sin and impudence.

Lord R. Then my muse is to your taste. — But drink away; the night steals upon us; we shall want time to be lewd in. — Hey, page! sally out, sirrah, and see what's doing in the camp; we'll beat up their quarters presently.

Page. I'll bring your lordship an exact account. (*Ex. Page.*)

Lord R. Now let the spirit of clary go round! Fill me a brimmer. Here's to our forlorn hope! — Courage, knight; victory attends you!

Sir John. And laurels shall crown me. Drink away, and be damned.

Lord R. Again boys; t'other glass, and damn morality.

Sir John. (*Drunk.*) Ay — damn morality — and damn the watch! — And let the constable be married!

All. Huzza!

(*Re-enter Page.*)

Lord R. How are the streets inhabited, sirrah?

Page. My lord, it's Sunday night; they are full of drunken citizens.

Lord R. Along then, boys, we shall have a feast.

Col. B. Along, noble knight.

Sir John. Ay — along, Bully; and he that says Sir John Brute is not as drunk and as religious as the drunkenest citizen of 'em all — is a liar, and the son of a whore.

Col. B. Why, that was bravely spoke, and like a freeborn Englishman.

Sir John. What's that to you, sir, whether I am an Englishman or a Frenchman?

Col. B. Zoons, you are not angry, sir?

Sir John. Zoons, I am angry, sir! — for if I am a freeborn Englishman, what have you to do, even to talk of my privileges?

Lord R. Why, prithee, knight, don't quarrel here, leave private animosities to be decided by daylight; let the night be employed against the public enemy.

Sir John. My lord, I respect you, because you are a man of quality: but I'll make that fellow know, I am within a hair's breadth as absolute by my privileges, as the king of France is by his prerogative. He by his prerogative takes money where it is not his due; I by my privilege refuse paying it where I owe it. Liberty and property and Old England, huzza!

All. Huzza!

(*Exit* Sir John, *reeling, all following him.*)

Scene [III.] — *A bedchamber*

(*Enter* Lady Brute *and* Belinda.)

Lady B. Sure, it's late, Belinda? I begin to be sleepy.

Bel. Yes, 'tis near twelve. Will you go to bed?

Lady B. To bed, my dear! And by that time I'm fallen into a sweet sleep (or perhaps a sweet dream, which is better and better), Sir John will come home, roaring drunk, and be overjoyed he finds me in a condition to be disturbed.

Bel. Oh, you need not fear him, he's in for all night. The servants say he's gone to drink with my Lord Rake.

Lady B. Nay, 'tis not very likely, indeed, such suitable company should part presently. What hogs men turn, Belinda, when they grow weary of women!

Bel. And what owls they are whilst they are fond of 'em!

Lady B. But that we may forgive well enough, because they are so upon our accounts.

Bel. We ought to do so indeed; but 'tis a hard matter. For when a man is really in love, he looks so insufferably silly, that though a woman liked him well enough before, she has then much ado to endure the sight of him. And this I take to be the reason why lovers are so generally ill used.

Lady B. Well, I own now, I'm well enough pleased to see a man look like an ass for me.

Bel. Ay, I'm pleased he should look like an ass too — that is, I'm pleased with myself for making him look so.

Lady B. Nay truly, I think if he'd find some other way to express his passion, 'twould be more for his advantage.

Bel. Yes; for then a woman might like his passion and him too.

Lady B. Yet, Belinda, after all, a woman's life would be but a dull business, if 'twere not for men; and men that can look like asses too. We should never blame fate for the shortness of our days; our time would hang wretchedly upon our hands.

Bel. Why truly, they do help us off with a good share on't. For were there no men in the world, o' my conscience, I should be no longer a-dressing than I'm a-saying my prayers; nay, though it were Sunday: for you know that one may go to church without stays on.

Lady B. But don't you think emulation might do something? For every woman you see desires to be finer than her neighbor.

Bel. That's only that the men may like her better than her neighbor. No; if there were no men, adieu fine petticoats, we should be weary of wearing 'em.

Lady B. And adieu plays, we should be weary of seeing 'em.

Bel. Adieu Hyde Park, the dust would choke us.

Lady B. Adieu St. James's, walking would tire us.

Bel. Adieu London, the smoke would stifle us.

Lady B. And adieu going to church, for religion would ne'er prevail with us.

Both. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Bel. Our confession is so very hearty, sure we merit absolution.

Lady B. Not unless we go through with't, and confess all. So prithee, for the ease of our consciences, let's hide nothing.

Bel. Agreed.

Lady B. Why then I confess, that I love to sit in the fore-front of a box; for, if one sits behind, there's two acts gone, perhaps, before one's found out. And when I am there, if I perceive the men whispering and looking upon me, you must know I cannot for my life forbear thinking they talk to my advantage. And that sets a thousand little tickling vanities on foot —

Bel. Just my case for all the world; but go on.

Lady B. I watch with impatience for the next jest in the play, that I may laugh and show my white teeth. If the poet has been dull, and the jest be long a-coming, I pretend to whisper one to my friend, and from thence fall into a little small discourse in which I take occasion to show my face in all humors, brisk, pleased, serious, melancholy, languishing. — Not that what we say to one another causes any of these alterations. But —

Bel. Don't trouble yourself to explain. For if I'm not mistaken, you and I have had some of these necessary dialogues before now, with the same intention.

Lady B. Why, I'll swear, Belinda, some people do give strange agreeable airs to their faces in speaking. Tell me true — did you never practise in the glass?

Bel. Why, did you?

Lady B. Yes, faith, many a time.

Bel. And I too, I own it; both how to speak myself, and how to look when others speak. But my glass and I could never yet agree what face I should make when they come blurt out with a nasty thing in a play. For all the men presently look upon the women, that's certain; so laugh they must not, though our stays burst for't, because that's telling truth, and owning we understand the jest. And to look serious is so dull, when the whole house is a-laughing.

Lady B. Besides, that looking serious does really betray our knowledge in the matter, as much as laughing with the company would do: for if we did not understand the thing, we should naturally do like other people.

Bel. For my part, I always take that occasion to blow my nose.

Lady B. You must blow your nose half off then at some plays.

Bel. Why don't some reformer or other beat the poet for't?

Lady B. Because he is not so sure of our private approbation as of our public thanks. Well, sure there is not upon earth so impertinent a thing as women's modesty.

Bel. Yes; men's *fantasque*, that obliges us to it. If we quit our modesty, they say we lose our charms; and yet they know that very modesty is affectation, and rail at our hypocrisy.

Lady B. Thus one would think 'twere a

hard matter to please 'em, niece. Yet our kind mother nature has given us something that makes amends for all. Let our weakness be what it will, mankind will still be weaker; and whilst there is a world, 'tis woman that will govern it. But prithee, one word of poor Constant before we go to bed, if it be but to furnish matter for dreams. — I dare swear he's talking of me now, or thinking of me at least, though it be in the middle of his prayers.

Bel. So he ought, I think; for you were pleased to make him a good round advance to-day, madam.

Lady B. Why, I have e'en plagued him enough to satisfy any reasonable woman. He has besieged me these two years to no purpose.

Bel. And if he besieged you two years more, he'd be well enough paid, so he had the plundering of you at last.

Lady B. That may be: but I'm afraid the town won't be able to hold out much longer; for to confess the truth to you, Belinda, the garrison begins to grow mutinous.

Bel. Then the sooner you capitulate, the better.

Lady B. Yet methinks I would fain stay a little longer to see you fixed too, that we might start together, and see who could love longest. What think you, if Heartfree should have a month's mind to you?

Bel. Why, faith, I could almost be in love with him for despising that foolish, affected lady Fancyful; but I'm afraid he's too cold ever to warm himself by my fire.

Lady B. Then he deserves to be froze to death. Would I were a man for your sake, dear rogue. (*Kissing her.*)

Bel. You'd wish yourself a woman again for your own, or the men are mistaken. But if I could make a conquest of this son of Bacchus, and rival his bottle, what should I do with him? He has no fortune; I can't marry him; and sure you would not have me commit fornication.

Lady B. Why, if you did, child, 'twould be but a good friendly part; if 'twere only to keep me in countenance whilst I commit — you know what.

Bel. Well, if I can't resolve to serve you that way, I may perhaps some other, as much to your satisfaction. But pray, how shall we contrive to see these blades again quickly?

Lady B. We must e'en have recourse to the old way; make 'em an appointment 'twixt jest and earnest, 'twill look like a frolic, and that you know's a very good thing to save a woman's blushes.

Bel. You advise well; but where shall it be?

Lady B. In Spring Garden. But they shan't know their women, till their women pull off their masks; for a surprise is the most agreeable thing in the world: and I find myself in a very good humor, ready to do 'em any good turn I can think on.

Bel. Then pray write 'em the necessary billet, without farther delay.

Lady B. Let's go into your chamber, then, and whilst you say your prayers, I'll do it, child. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

Scene [I.] — *Covent Garden*

(*Enter* Lord Rake, Sir John, *&c., with swords drawn.*)

Lord R. Is the dog dead?

Col. B. No, damn him! I heard him wheeze.

Lord R. How the witch his wife howled!

Col. B. Ay, she'll alarm the watch presently.

Lord R. Appear, knight, then; come, you have a good cause to fight for, — there's a man murdered.

Sir John. Is there! Then let his ghost be satisfied; for I'll sacrifice a constable to it presently, and burn his body upon his wooden chair.

(*Enter a Tailor, with a bundle under his arm.*)

Col. B. How now! What have we got here? A thief?

Tailor. No, an't please you; I'm no thief.

Rake. That we'll see presently. — Here, let the general examine him.

Sir John. Ay, ay; let me examine him, and I'll lay a hundred pound I find him guilty, in spite of his teeth — for he looks — like a — sneaking rascal. — Come, sirrah, without equivocation or mental reservation, tell me of what opinion you are, and what calling; for by them — I shall guess at your morals.

Tailor. An't please you, I'm a dissenting journeyman tailor.

Sir John. Then, sirrah, you love lying by your religion, and theft by your trade. And so, that your punishment may be suitable to your crimes, — I'll have you first gagged, — and then hanged.

Tailor. Pray, good worthy gentlemen, don't abuse me; indeed I'm an honest man, and a good workman, though I say it that should not say it.

Sir John. No words, sirrah, but attend your fate.

Lord R. Let me see what's in that bundle.

Tailor. An't please you, it's the doctor of the parish's gown.

Lord R. The doctor's gown! — Hark you, knight, you won't stick at abusing the clergy, will you?

Sir John. No, I'm drunk, and I'll abuse anything — but my wife; and her I name — with reverence.

Lord R. Then you shall wear this gown, whilst you charge the watch; that though the blows fall upon you, the scandal may light upon the church.

Sir John. A generous design — by all the gods! — give it me.

(*Takes the gown and puts it on.*)

Tailor. O dear gentleman, I shall be quite undone, if you take the gown.

Sir John. Retire, sirrah; and since you carry off your skin — go home, and be happy.

Tailor (*pausing*). I think I had e'en as good follow the gentleman's friendly advice; for if I dispute any longer, who knows but the whim may take him to case me? These courtiers are fuller of tricks than they are of money; they'll sooner cut a man's throat, than pay his bill. (*Exit Tailor.*)

Sir John. So, how d'ye like my shapes now?

Lord R. This will do to a miracle; he looks like a bishop going to the holy war. — But to your arms, gentlemen, the enemy appears.

(*Enter Constable and Watch.*)

Watchman. Stand! Who goes there? Come before the constable.

Sir John. The constable's a rascal — and you are the son of a whore!

Watch. A good civil answer for a parson, truly!

Con. Methinks, sir, a man of your coat might set a better example.

Sir John. Sirrah, I'll make you know — there are men of my coat can set as bad examples — as you can do, you dog you!

(Sir John *strikes the Constable. They knock him down, disarm him, and seize him.* Lord R[ake], *&c., run away.*)

Con. So, we have secured the parson, however.

Sir John. Blood, and blood — and blood!

Watch. Lord have mercy upon us! How the wicked wretch raves of blood. I'll warrant he has been murdering somebody to-night.

Sir John. Sirrah, there's nothing got by murder but a halter. My talent lies towards drunkenness and simony.

Watch. Why, that now was spoke like a man of parts, neighbors: it's pity he should be so disguised.

Sir John. You lie — I'm not disguised; for I am drunk barefaced.

Watch. Look you there again! — This is a mad parson, Mr. Constable; I'll lay a pot of ale upon's head, he's a good preacher.

Con. Come, sir, out of respect to your calling, I shan't put you into the round-house; but we must secure you in our drawing-room till morning, that you may do no mischief. So, come along.

Sir John. You may put me where you

will, sirrah, now you have overcome me. — But if I can't do mischief, I'll think of mischief — in spite of your teeth, you dog you. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene [II.] — *A bedchamber*

(*Enter* Heartfree, *solus.*)

What the plague ails me? — Love? No, I thank you for that; my heart's rock still. — Yet 'tis Belinda that disturbs me; that's positive. — Well, what of all that? Must I love her for being troublesome? at that rate, I might love all the women I meet, egad. But hold! — though I don't love her for disturbing me, yet she may disturb me, because I love her. — Ay, that may be, faith. I have dreamed of her, that's certain. — Well, so I have of my mother; therefore, what's that to the purpose? Ay, but Belinda runs in my mind waking. — And so does many a damned thing that I don't care a farthing for. Methinks, though, I would fain be talking to her, and yet I have no business. — Well, am I the first man that has had a mind to do an impertinent thing?

(*Enter* Constant.)

Const. How now, Heartfree? What makes you up and dressed so soon? I thought none but lovers quarrelled with their beds; I expected to have found you snoring, as I used to do.

Heart. Why, faith, friend, 'tis the care I have of your affairs that makes me so thoughtful; I have been studying all night how to bring your matter about with Belinda.

Const. With Belinda?

Heart. With my lady, I mean: — and faith, I have mighty hopes on't. Sure you must be very well satisfied with her behavior to you yesterday?

Const. So well, that nothing but a lover's fears can make me doubt of success. But what can this sudden change proceed from?

Heart. Why, you saw her husband beat her, did you not?

Const. That's true: a husband is scarce to be borne upon any terms, much less when he fights with his wife. Methinks she should e'en have cuckolded him upon the very spot, to show that after the battle she was master of the field.

Heart. A council of war of women would infallibly have advised her to't. But, I confess, so agreeable a woman as Belinda deserves a better usage.

Const. Belinda again!

Heart. My lady, I mean. — What a pox makes me blunder so to-day? — (*Aside.*) A plague of this treacherous tongue!

Const. Prithee look upon me seriously, Heartfree. — Now answer me directly! Is it my lady, or Belinda, employs your careful thoughts thus?

Heart. My lady, or Belinda?

Const. In love! by this light, in love!

Heart. In love?

Const. Nay, ne'er deny it; for thou'lt do it so awkwardly, 'twill but make the jest sit heavier about thee. My dear friend, I give thee much joy.

Heart. Why prithee, you won't persuade me to it, will you?

Const. That she's mistress of your tongue, that's plain; and I know you are so honest a fellow, your tongue and heart always go together. But how — but how the devil? Pha, ha, ha, ha! —

Heart. Heyday! Why, sure you don't believe it in earnest?

Const. Yes, I do; because I see you deny it in jest.

Heart. Nay, but look you, Ned — a — deny in jest — a — gadzooks, you know I say — a — when a man denies a thing in jest — a —

Const. Pha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Heart. Nay, then we shall have it. What, because a man stumbles at a word! Did you never make a blunder?

Const. Yes, for I am in love, I own it.

Heart. Then, so am I. — Now laugh till thy soul's glutted with mirth. — (*Embracing him.*) But, dear Constant, don't tell the town on't.

Const. Nay, then 'twere almost pity to laugh at thee, after so honest a confession. But tell us a little, Jack. By what new-invented arms has this mighty stroke been given?

Heart. E'en by that unaccountable weapon, called *Je-ne-sais-quoi;* for everything that can come within the verge of beauty, I have seen it with indifference.

Const. So in few words then; the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* has been too hard for the quilted petticoat.

Heart. Egad, I think the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* is in the quilted petticoat; at least, 'tis certain, I ne'er think on't without — a — a *Je-ne-sais-quoi* in every part about me.

Const. Well, but have all your remedies lost their virtue? have you turned her inside out yet?

Heart. I dare not so much as think on't.

Const. But don't the two years' fatigue I have had discourage you?

Heart. Yes: I dread what I foresee; yet cannot quit the enterprise. Like some soldiers, whose courage dwells more in their honor than their nature; on they go, though the body trembles at what the soul makes it undertake.

Const. Nay, if you expect your mistress will use you, as your profanations against her sex deserve, you tremble justly. But how do you intend to proceed, friend?

Heart. Thou know'st I'm but a novice; be friendly and advise me.

Const. Why, look you, then; I'd have you — serenade and a — write a song — go to church — look like a fool — be very officious: ogle, write, and lead out; and who knows, but in a year or two's time, you may be — called a troublesome puppy, and sent about your business?

Heart. That's hard.

Const. Yet thus it oft falls out with lovers, sir.

Heart. Pox on me for making one of the number.

Const. Have a care: say no saucy things: 'twill but augment your crime; and if your mistress hears on't, increase your punishment.

Heart. Prithee say something then to encourage me; you know I helped you in your distress.

Const. Why, then, to encourage you to perseverance that you may be thoroughly ill-used for your offences, I'll put you in mind, that even the coyest ladies of 'em all are made up of desires, as well as we; and though they do hold out a long time, they will capitulate at last. For that thundering engineer, Nature, does make such havoc in the town, they must surrender at long run, or perish in their own flames.

(*Enter a Footman.*)

Foot. Sir, there's a porter without with a letter; he desires to give it into your own hands.

Const. Call him in. [*Exit Footman.*]

(*Enter Porter.*)

Const. What, Joe! is it thee?

Porter. An't please you, sir, I was ordered to deliver this into your hands, by two well-shaped ladies, at the New Exchange. I was at your honor's lodgings, and your servants sent me hither.

Const. 'Tis well. Are you to carry any answer?

Porter. No, my noble master. They gave me my orders, and whip, they were gone, like a maidenhead at fifteen.

Const. Very well; there.

(*Gives him money.*)

Porter. God bless your honor.

(*Exit Porter.*)

Const. Now let's see what honest trusty Joe has brought us. — (*Reads.*) "If you and your playfellow can spare time from your business and devotions, don't fail to be at Spring Garden about eight in the evening. You'll find nothing there but women, so you need bring no other arms than what you usually carry about you." — So, playfellow: here's something to stay your stomach till your mistress's dish is ready for you.

Heart. Some of our old battered acquaintance. I won't go, not I.

Const. Nay, that you can't avoid: there's honor in the case; 'tis a challenge, and I want a second.

Heart. I doubt I shall be but a very useless one to you; for I'm so disheartened by this wound Belinda has given me, I don't think I shall have courage enough to draw my sword.

Const. Oh, if that be all, come along; I'll warrant you find sword enough for such enemies as we have to deal withal. (*Exeunt.*)

[Scene III. — *A street.*]

(*Enter Constable, &c., with* Sir John.)

Con. Come along, sir; I thought to have let you slip this morning, because you were a minister; but you are as drunk and as abusive as ever. We'll see what the justice of the peace will say to you.

Sir John. And you shall see what I'll say to the justice of the peace, sirrah. (*They knock at the door.*)

(*Enter Servant.*)

Con. Pray acquaint his worship we have an unruly parson here. We are unwilling to expose him, but don't know what to do with him.

Serv. I'll acquaint my master. (*Exit Servant.*)

Sir John. You — constable — what damned justice is this?

Con. One that will take care of you, I warrant you.

(*Enter Justice.*)

Just. Well, Mr. Constable, what's the disorder here?

Con. An't please your worship —

Sir John. Let me speak, and be damned! — I'm a divine, and can unfold mysteries better than you can do.

Just. Sadness, sadness! a minister so overtaken! Pray, sir, give the constable leave to speak, and I'll hear you very patiently; I assure you, sir, I will.

Sir John. Sir — you are a very civil magistrate. Your most humble servant.

Con. An't please your worship then, he has attempted to beat the watch to-night, and swore —

Sir John. You lie!

Just. Hold, pray, sir, a little.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant.

Con. Indeed, sir, he came at us without any provocation, called us whores and rogues, and laid us on with a great quarter-staff. He was in my Lord Rake's company. They have been playing the devil to-night.

Just. Hem — hem — pray, sir — may you be chaplain to my lord?

Sir John. Sir — I presume — I may if I will.

Just. My meaning, sir, is — are you so?

Sir John. Sir — you mean very well.

Just. He, hem — hem — under favor, sir, pray answer me directly.

Sir John. Under favor, sir — do you use to answer directly when you are drunk?

Just. Good lack, good lack! Here's nothing to be got from him. — Pray, sir, may I crave your name?

Sir John. Sir — my name's (*he hic-cups*) Hiccup, sir.

Just. Hiccup? Doctor Hiccup! I have known a great many country parsons of that name, especially down in the Fens. — Pray where do you live, sir?

Sir John. Here —— and there, sir.

Just. Why, what a strange man is this! — where do you preach, sir? Have you any cure?

Sir John. Sir — I have — a very good cure — for a clap, at your service.

Just. Lord have mercy upon us!

Sir John (*aside*). This fellow does ask so many impertinent questions, I believe, egad, 'tis the justice's wife in the justice's clothes.

Just. Mr. Constable, I vow and protest, I don't know what to do with him.

Con. Truly, he has been but a troublesome guest to us all night.

Just. I think I had e'en best let him go about his business, for I'm unwilling to expose him.

Con. E'en what your worship thinks fit.

Sir John. Sir — not to interrupt Mr. Constable, I have a small favor to ask.

Just. Sir, I open both my ears to you.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant. I have a little urgent business calls upon me; and therefore I desire the favor of you to bring matters to a conclusion.

Just. Sir, if I were sure that business

were not to commit more disorders, I would release you.

Sir John. None — by my priesthood.

Just. Then, Mr. Constable, you may discharge him.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant. If you please to accept of a bottle —

Just. I thank you kindly, sir; but I never drink in a morning. Good-bye to ye, sir, good-bye to ye.

Sir John. Good-bye t'ye, good sir. (*Exit Justice.*) So — now, Mr. Constable, shall you and I go pick up a whore together?

Con. No, thank you, sir; my wife's enough to satisfy any reasonable man.

Sir John (*aside*). He, he, he, he, he! — the fool is married then. — [*Aloud.*] Well, you won't go?

Con. Not I, truly.

Sir John. Then I'll go by myself; and you and your wife may be damned!

(*Exit* Sir John.)

Con. (*gazing after him*). Why, God-a-mercy, parson! (*Exeunt.*)

Scene [IV.] — *Spring Garden*

(Constant *and* Heartfree *cross the stage. As they go off, enter* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle, *masked, and dogging 'em.*)

Const. So: I think we are about the time appointed. Let us walk up this way. (*Exeunt.*)

Lady Fan. Good! Thus far I have dogged 'em without being discovered. 'Tis infallibly some intrigue that brings them to Spring Garden. How my poor heart is torn and racked with fear and jealousy! Yet let it be anything but that flirt Belinda, and I'll try to bear it. But if it prove her, all that's woman in me shall be employed to destroy her.

(*Exeunt after* Constant *and* Heartfree.)

(*Re-enter* Constant *and* Heartfree. Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle *still following at a distance.*)

Const. I see no females yet that have anything to say to us. I'm afraid we are bantered.

Heart. I wish we were: for I'm in no humor to make either them or myself merry.

Const. Nay, I'm sure you'll make them merry enough, if I tell 'em why you are dull. But prithee, why so heavy and sad before you begin to be ill used?

Heart. For the same reason, perhaps, that you are so brisk and well pleased; because both pains and pleasures are generally more considerable in prospect than when they come to pass.

(*Enter* Lady Brute *and* Belinda, *masked, and poorly dressed.*)

Const. How now, who are these? Not our game, I hope.

Heart. If they are, we are e'en well enough served, to come hunting here, when we had so much better game in chase elsewhere.

Lady Fan. (*to* Mademoiselle). So, those are their ladies without doubt. But I'm afraid that doily stuff is not worn for want of better clothes. They are the very shape and size of Belinda and her aunt.

Mad. So day be inteed, matam.

Lady Fan. We'll slip into this close arbor, where we may hear all they say.

(*Exeunt* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.)

Lady B. What, are you afraid of us, gentlemen?

Heart. Why truly, I think we may, if appearance don't lie.

Bel. Do you always find women what they appear to be, sir?

Heart. No, forsooth; but I seldom find 'em better than they appear to be.

Bel. Then the outside's best, you think?

Heart. 'Tis the honestest.

Const. Have a care, Heartfree; you are relapsing again.

Lady B. Why, does the gentleman use to rail at women?

Const. He has done formerly.

Bel. I suppose he had very good cause for't. — They did not use you so well as you thought you deserved, sir.

Lady B. They made themselves merry at your expense, sir.

Bel. Laughed when you sighed.

Lady B. Slept while you were waking.

Bel. Had your porter beat.

Lady B. And threw your billets-doux in the fire.

Heart. Heyday! I shall do more than rail presently.

Bel. Why, you won't beat us, will you?

Heart. I don't know but I may.

Const. What the devil's coming here? Sir John in a gown? — and drunk i'faith.

(*Enter* Sir John.)

Sir John. What, a pox! — here's Constant, Heartfree — and two whores, egad! — O you covetous rogues! what, have you never a spare punk for your friend? — But I'll share with you.

(*He seizes both the women.*)

Heart. Why, what the plague have you been doing, knight?

Sir John. Why, I have been beating the watch, and scandalizing the clergy.

Heart. A very good account, truly!

Sir John. And what do you think I'll do next?

Const. Nay, that no man can guess.

Sir John. Why, if you'll let me sup with you, I'll treat both your strumpets.

Lady B. (*aside*). O Lord, we are undone!

Heart. No, we can't sup together, because we have some affairs elsewhere. But if you'll accept of these two ladies, we'll be so complaisant to you, to resign our right in 'em.

Bel. (*aside*). Lord, what shall we do?

Sir John. Let me see; their clothes are such damned clothes, they won't pawn for the reckoning.

Heart. Sir John, your servant. Rapture attend you.

Const. Adieu, ladies, make much of the gentleman.

Lady B. Why sure, you won't leave us in the hands of a drunken fellow to abuse us!

Sir John. Who do you call a drunken fellow, you slut you? I'm a man of quality; the king has made me a knight.

Heart. Ay, ay, you are in good hands. Adieu, adieu! (Heart. *runs off.*)

Lady B. The devil's hands! — Let me go, or I'll — For heaven's sake protect us!

(*She breaks from him, runs to* Constant, *twitching off her mask, and clapping it on again.*)

Sir John. I'll devil you, you jade you! I'll demolish your ugly face!

Const. Hold a little, knight, she swoons.

Sir John. I'll swoon her!

Const. Hey, Heartfree!

(*Re-enter* Heartfree. Belinda *runs to him, and shows her face.*)

Heart. O heavens! My dear creature, stand there a little.

Const. (*aside to* Heart.). Pull him off, Jack.

Heart. Hold, mighty man; look you, sir, we did but jest with you. These are ladies of our acquaintance, that we had a mind to frighten a little, but now you must leave us.

Sir John. Oons, I won't leave you, not I!

Heart. Nay, but you must though; and therefore make no words on't.

Sir John. Then you are a couple of damned uncivil fellows. And I hope your punks will give you sauce to your mutton! (*Exit* Sir John.)

Lady B. Oh, I shall never come to myself again, I'm so frightened.

Const. 'Twas a narrow 'scape, indeed.

Bel. Women must needs have frolics, you see, whatever they cost 'em.

Heart. This might have proved a dear one though.

Lady B. You are the more obliged to us, for the risk we run upon your accounts.

Const. And I hope you'll acknowledge something due to our knight-errantry, ladies. This is a second time we have delivered you.

Lady B. 'Tis true; and since we see fate has designed you for our guardians, 'twill make us the more willing to trust ourselves in your hands. But you must not have the worse opinion of us for our innocent frolic.

HEART. Ladies, you may command our opinions in everything that is to your advantage.

BEL. Then, sir, I command you to be of opinion, that women are sometimes better than they appear to be.

(LADY BRUTE *and* CONSTANT *talk apart.*)

HEART. Madam, you have made a convert of me in everything. I'm grown a fool: I could be fond of a woman.

BEL. I thank you, sir, in the name of the whole sex.

HEART. Which sex nothing but yourself could ever have atoned for.

BEL. Now has my vanity a devilish itch to know in what my merit consists.

HEART. In your humility, madam, that keeps you ignorant it consists at all.

BEL. One other compliment with that serious face, and I hate you for ever after.

HEART. Some women love to be abused: is that it you would be at?

BEL. No, not that neither; but I'd have men talk plainly what's fit for women to hear; without putting 'em either to a real or an affected blush.

HEART. Why then, in as plain terms as I can find to express myself, I could love you even to — matrimony itself, a-most, egad.

BEL. Just as Sir John did her ladyship there. What think you? Don't you believe one month's time might bring you down to the same indifference, only clad in a little better manners, perhaps? Well, you men are unaccountable things, mad till you have your mistresses, and then stark mad till you are rid of 'em again. Tell me, honestly, is not your patience put to a much severer trial after possession than before?

HEART. With a great many, I must confess, it is, to our eternal scandal; but I — dear creature, do but try me.

BEL. That's the surest way, indeed, to know, but not the safest. — (*To* LADY B.) Madam, are not you for taking a turn in the Great Walk? It's almost dark, nobody will know us.

LADY B. Really I find myself something idle, Belinda; besides, I dote upon this little odd private corner. But don't let my lazy fancy confine you.

CONST. (*aside*). So, she would be left alone with me; that's well.

BEL. Well, we'll take one turn, and come to you again. — [*To* HEART.] Come, sir, shall we go pry into the secrets of the garden? Who knows what discoveries we may make?

HEART. Madam, I'm at your service.

CONST. (*to* HEART. *aside*). Don't make too much haste back; for d'ye hear — I may be busy.

HEART. Enough.

(*Ex*[*eunt*] BELINDA *and* HEARTFREE.)

LADY B. Sure you think me scandalously free, Mr. Constant. I'm afraid I shall lose your good opinion of me.

CONST. My good opinion, madam, is like your cruelty, never to be removed.

LADY B. But if I should remove my cruelty, then there's an end of your good opinion.

CONST. There is not so strict an alliance between 'em neither. 'Tis certain I should love you then better (if that be possible) than I do now; and where I love, I always esteem.

LADY B. Indeed, I doubt you much. Why, suppose you had a wife, and she should entertain a gallant?

CONST. If I gave her just cause, how could I justly condemn her?

LADY B. Ah, but you'd differ widely about just causes.

CONST. But blows can bear no dispute.

LADY B. Nor ill manners much, truly.

CONST. Then no woman upon earth has so just a cause as you have.

LADY B. Oh, but a faithful wife is a beautiful character.

CONST. To a deserving husband, I confess it is.

LADY B. But can his faults release my duty?

CONST. In equity, without doubt. And where laws dispense with equity, equity should dispense with laws.

LADY B. Pray let's leave this dispute; for you men have as much witchcraft in your arguments as women have in their eyes.

Const. But whilst you attack me with your charms, 'tis but reasonable I assault you with mine.

Lady B. The case is not the same. What mischief we do, we can't help, and therefore are to be forgiven.

Const. Beauty soon obtains pardon for the pain that it gives, when it applies the balm of compassion to the wound; but a fine face, and a hard heart, is almost as bad as an ugly face and a soft one: both very troublesome to many a poor gentleman.

Lady B. Yes, and to many a poor gentlewoman too, I can assure you. But pray, which of 'em is it that most afflicts you?

Const. Your glass and conscience will inform you, madam. But for heaven's sake! (for now I must be serious) if pity or if gratitude can move you, (*taking her hand*) if constancy and truth have power to tempt you; if love, if adoration can affect you, give me at least some hopes that time may do what you perhaps mean never to perform; 'twill ease my sufferings, though not quench my flame.

Lady B. Your sufferings eased, your flame would soon abate; and that I would preserve, not quench it, sir.

Const. Would you preserve it, nourish it with favors; for that's the food it naturally requires.

Lady B. Yet on that natural food 'twould surfeit soon, should I resolve to grant all that you would ask.

Const. And in refusing all, you starve it. Forgive me, therefore, since my hunger rages, if I at last grow wild, and in my frenzy force at least this from you. (*Kissing her hand.*) Or if you'd have my flame soar higher still, then grant me this, and this, and this (*kissing first her hand, then her neck*), — and thousands more. — (*Aside.*) For now's the time, she melts into compassion.

Lady B. (*aside*). Poor coward virtue, how it shuns the battle. — [*Aloud.*] O heavens! let me go.

Const. Ay, go, ay: where shall we go, my charming angel, — into this private arbor. — Nay, let's lose no time — moments are precious.

Lady B. And lovers wild. Pray let us stop here; at least for this time.

Const. 'Tis impossible. He that has power over you, can have none over himself.

(*As he is forcing her into the arbor,* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle *bolt out upon them, and run over the stage.*)

Lady B. Ah, I'm lost!

Lady Fan. Fie! fie! fie! fie! fie! }
Mad. Fie! fie! fie! fie! fie! }

[*Exeunt.*]

Const. Death and furies! who are these?

Lady B. O heavens! I'm out of my wits; if they knew me, I'm ruined.

Const. Don't be frightened! ten thousand to one they are strangers to you.

Lady B. Whatever they are, I won't stay here a moment longer.

Const. Whither will you go?

Lady B. Home, as if the devil were in me. — Lord, where's this Belinda now?

([*Re-*]*enter* Belinda *and* Heartfree.)

Oh! it's well you are come: I'm so frightened, my hair stands on end. Let's begone, for heaven's sake!

Bel. Lord, what's the matter?

Lady B. The devil's the matter, we are discovered. Here's a couple of women have done the most impertinent thing! — Away, away, away, away, away!

(*Exit running.* [*The others follow.*])

(*Re-enter* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.)

Lady Fan. Well, Mademoiselle, 'tis a prodigious thing how women can suffer filthy fellows to grow so familiar with 'em.

Mad. Ah, matam, *il n'y a rien de si naturel.*

Lady Fan. Fie! fie! fie! But oh, my heart! O jealousy! O torture! I'm upon the rack. What shall I do? My lover's lost, I ne'er shall see him mine. — (*Pausing.*) But I may be revenged; and that's the same thing. Ah, sweet revenge! Thou welcome thought, thou healing balsam to my wounded soul! Be but propitious on this one occasion, I'll place my heaven in thee, for all my life to come.

To woman how indulgent nature's kind!
No blast of fortune long disturbs her mind:
Compliance to her fate supports her still;
If love won't make her happy — mischief will. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT V.

Scene [I.] — Lady Fancyful's *house*

(*Enter* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.)

Lady Fan. Well, Mademoiselle; did you dog the filthy things?

Mad. *O que oui,* matam.

Lady Fan. And where are they?

Mad. *Au logis.*

Lady Fan. What, men and all?

Mad. *Tous ensemble.*

Lady Fan. O confidence! What, carry their fellows to their own house?

Mad. *C'est que le mari n'y est pas.*

Lady Fan. No, so I believe, truly. But he shall be there, and quickly too, if I can find him out. Well, 'tis a prodigious thing, to see when men and women get together, how they fortify one another in their impudence. But if that drunken fool, her husband, be to be found in e'er a tavern in town, I'll send him amongst 'em. I'll spoil their sport!

Mad. *En vérité,* matam, *ce serait dommage.*

Lady Fan. 'Tis in vain to oppose it, Mademoiselle; therefore never go about it. For I am the steadiest creature in the world — when I have determined to do mischief. So, come along. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene [II]. — Sir John Brute's *house*

(*Enter* Constant, Heartfree, Lady Brute, Belinda, *and* Lovewell.)

Lady B. But are you sure you don't mistake, Lovewell?

Love. Madam, I saw 'em all go into the tavern together, and my master was so drunk he could scarce stand. [*Exit.*]

Lady B. Then, gentlemen, I believe we may venture to let you stay and play at cards with us an hour or two; for they'll scarce part till morning.

Bel. I think 'tis pity they should ever part.

Const. The company that's here, madam.

Lady B. Then, sir, the company that's here must remember to part itself in time.

Const. Madam, we don't intend to forfeit your future favors by an indiscreet usage of this. The moment you give us the signal, we shan't fail to make our retreat.

Lady B. Upon those conditions, then, let us sit down to cards.

([*Re-*]*enter* Lovewell.)

Love. O Lord, madam! here's my master just staggering in upon you; he has been quarrelsome yonder, and they have kicked him out of the company.

Lady B. Into the closet, gentlemen, for heaven's sake! I'll wheedle him to bed, if possible.

(Constant *and* Heartfree *run into the closet.*)

(*Enter* Sir John, *all dirt and bloody.*)

Lady B. Ah — ah — he's all over blood!

Sir John. What the plague does the woman — squall for? Did you never see a man in pickle before?

Lady B. Lord, where have you been?

Sir John. I have been at — cuffs.

Lady B. I fear that is not all. I hope you are not wounded.

Sir John. Sound as a roach, wife.

Lady B. I'm mighty glad to hear it.

Sir John. You know — I think you lie.

Lady B. I know you do me wrong to think so, then. For Heaven's my witness, I had rather see my own blood trickle down, than yours.

Sir John. Then will I be crucified.

Lady B. 'Tis a hard fate I should not be believed.

Sir John. 'Tis a damned atheistical age, wife.

Lady B. I am sure I have given you a thousand tender proofs, how great my care is of you. Nay, spite of all your cruel thoughts, I'll still persist, and at this moment, if I can, persuade you to lie down, and sleep a little.

Sir John. Why — do you think I am drunk — you slut, you?

Lady B. Heaven forbid I should! But I'm afraid you are feverish. Pray let me feel your pulse.

Sir John. Stand off, and be damned!

Lady B. Why, I see your distemper in your very eyes. You are all on fire. Pray go to bed; let me entreat you.

Sir John. — Come kiss me, then.

Lady B. (*kissing him*). There: now go. — (*Aside.*) He stinks like poison.

Sir John. I see it goes damnably against your stomach — and therefore — kiss me again.

Lady B. Nay, now you fool me.

Sir John. Do't, I say.

Lady B. (*aside*). Ah, Lord have mercy upon me! Well; there: [*kisses him*] now will you go?

Sir John. Now, wife, you shall see my gratitude. You give me two kisses — I'll give you — two hundred.

(*Kisses and tumbles her.*)

Lady B. O Lord! Pray, Sir John, be quiet. Heavens, what a pickle am I in!

Bel. (*aside*). If I were in her pickle, I'd call my gallant out of the closet, and he should cudgel him soundly.

Sir John. So; now, you being as dirty and as nasty as myself, we may go pig together. But first I must have a cup of your cold-tea, wife. (*Going to the closet.*)

Lady B. [*aside*]. Oh, I'm ruined! — [*Aloud.*] There's none there, my dear.

Sir John. I'll warrant you I'll find some, my dear.

Lady B. You can't open the door, the lock's spoiled. I have been turning and turning the key this half hour to no purpose. I'll send for the smith tomorrow.

Sir John. There's ne'er a smith in Europe can open a door with more expedition than I can do. — As for example — Pou! — (*He bursts open the door with his foot.*) — How now! — What the devil have we got here? — Constant! — Heartfree! — and two whores again, egad! — This is the worst cold-tea — that ever I met with in my life. —

([*Re-*]*enter* Constant *and* Heartfree.)

Lady B. (*aside*). O Lord, what will become of us?

Sir John. Gentlemen — I am your very humble servant — I give you many thanks — I see you take care of my family — I shall do all I can to return the obligation.

Const. Sir, how oddly soever this business may appear to you, you would have no cause to be uneasy, if you knew the truth of all things; your lady is the most virtuous woman in the world, and nothing has passed but an innocent frolic.

Heart. Nothing else, upon my honor, sir.

Sir John. You are both very civil gentlemen — and my wife, there, is a very civil gentlewoman; therefore I don't doubt but many civil things have passed between you. Your very humble servant!

Lady B. (*aside to* Constant). Pray be gone; he's so drunk he can't hurt us to-night, and to-morrow morning you shall hear from us.

Const. [*aside to* Lady B.]. I'll obey you, madam. — [*Aloud.*] Sir, when you are cool, you'll understand reason better. So then I shall take the pains to inform you. If not — I wear a sword, sir, and so good-bye to you. — Come along, Heartfree. [*Exeunt* Const. *and* Heart.]

Sir John. — Wear a sword, sir! — And what of all that, sir? — He comes to my house; eats my meat; lies with my wife; dishonors my family; gets a bastard to inherit my estate. — And when I ask a civil account of all this — Sir, says he, I wear a sword. — Wear a sword, sir? Yes, sir, says he, I wear a sword. — It may be a good answer at cross-purposes; but 'tis a damned one to a man in my whimsical circumstance. — Sir, says he, I wear a sword! — (*To* Lady B.) And what do you wear now? ha? tell me. — (*Sitting down in a great-chair.*) What! you are modest, and can't? — Why then, I'll tell you, you slut you! You wear — an impudent lewd face — a damned designing heart — and a tail — and a tail full of —

(*He falls fast asleep snoring.*)

Lady B. So; thanks to kind heaven, he's fast for some hours.

Bel. 'Tis well he is so, that we may have time to lay our story handsomely; for we must lie like the devil to bring ourselves off.

Lady B. What shall we say, Belinda?

Bel. (*musing*). I'll tell you: it must all light upon Heartfree and I. We'll say he has courted me some time, but for reasons unknown to us, has ever been very earnest the thing might be kept from Sir John. That therefore hearing him upon the stairs, he run into the closet, though against our will, and Constant with him, to prevent jealousy. And to give this a good impudent face of truth, (that I may deliver you from the trouble you are in) I'll e'en (if he pleases) marry him.

Lady B. I'm beholding to you, cousin; but that would be carrying the jest a little too far for your own sake. You know he's a younger brother, and has nothing.

Bel. 'Tis true; but I like him, and have fortune enough to keep above extremity. I can't say I would live with him in a cell, upon love and bread and butter. But I had rather have the man I love, and a middle state of life, than that gentleman in the chair there, and twice your ladyship's splendor.

Lady B. In truth, niece, you are in the right on't: for I am very uneasy with my ambition. But perhaps, had I married as you'll do, I might have been as ill used.

Bel. Some risk, I do confess, there always is; but if a man has the least spark, either of honor or good-nature, he can never use a woman ill, that loves him, and makes his fortune both. Yet I must own to you, some little struggling I still have with this teasing ambition of ours. For pride, you know, is as natural to a woman, as 'tis to a saint. I can't help being fond of this rogue; and yet it goes to my heart to think I must never whisk to Hyde Park with above a pair of horses; I have no coronet upon my coach, nor a page to carry up my train. But above all — that business of place. — Well; taking place is a noble prerogative.

Lady B. Especially after a quarrel.

Bel. Or of a rival. But pray, say no more on't, for fear I change my mind. For o' my conscience, were't not for your affair in the balance, I should go near to pick up some odious man of quality yet, and only take poor Heartfree for a gallant.

Lady B. Then him you must have, however things go?

Bel. Yes.

Lady B. Why, we may pretend what we will; but 'tis a hard matter to live without the man we love.

Bel. Especially when we are married to the man we hate. Pray tell me: do the men of the town ever believe us virtuous, when they see us do so?

Lady B. Oh, no; nor indeed hardly, let us do what we will. They most of 'em think, there is no such thing as virtue considered in the strictest notions of it: and therefore when you hear 'em say, such a one is a woman of reputation, they only mean she's a woman of discretion. For they consider we have no more religion than they have, nor so much morality; and between you and I, Belinda, I'm afraid the want of inclination seldom protects any of us.

Bel. But what think you of the fear of being found out?

Lady B. I think that never kept any woman virtuous long. We are not such cowards neither. No: let us once pass fifteen, and we have too good an opinion of our own cunning to believe the world can penetrate into what we would keep a secret. And so, in short, we cannot reasonably blame the men for judging of us by themselves.

Bel. But sure we are not so wicked as they are, after all?

Lady B. We are as wicked, child, but our vice lies another way. Men have more courage than we, so they commit more bold, impudent sins. They quarrel, fight, swear, drink, blaspheme, and the like. Whereas we, being cowards, only backbite, tell lies, cheat at cards, and so forth. But 'tis late. Let's end our discourse for to-night, and out of an excess of charity take a small care of that nasty drunken thing there. — Do but look at him, Belinda.

Bel. Ah — 'tis a savory dish!

Lady B. As savory as 'tis, I'm cloyed with't. Prithee call the butler to take it away.

Bel. Call the butler! — call the scavenger! — (*To a Servant within.*) Who's there? Call Rasor! Let him take away his master, scour him clean with a little soap and sand, and so put him to bed.

Lady B. Come, Belinda, I'll e'en lie with you tonight; and in the morning we'll send for our gentlemen to set this matter even.

Bel. With all my heart.

Lady B. Good night, my dear!

(*Making a low curtesy to* Sir John.)

Both. Ha, ha, ha! (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter* Rasor.)

Ras. My lady there's a wag — my master there's a cuckold. Marriage is a slippery thing — women have depraved appetites. — My lady's a wag; I have heard all; I have seen all; I understand all; and I'll tell all; for my little Frenchwoman loves news dearly. This story'll gain her heart, or nothing will. — (*To his Master.*) Come, sir, your head's too full of fumes at present to make room for your jealousy; but I reckon we shall have rare work with you, when your pate's empty. Come to your kennel, you cuckoldly, drunken sot you!

(*Carries him out upon his back.*)

Scene [III.] — Lady Fancyful's *house*

(*Enter* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.)

Lady Fan. But why did not you tell me before, Mademoiselle, that Rasor and you were fond?

Mad. De modesty hinder me, matam.

Lady Fan. Why truly, modesty does often hinder us from doing things we have an extravagant mind to. But does he love you well enough yet, to do anything you bid him? Do you think to oblige you he would speak scandal?

Mad. Matam, to oblige your ladyship, he shall speak blasphemy.

Lady Fan. Why then, Mademoiselle, I'll tell you what you shall do. You shall engage him to tell his master all that passed at Spring Garden. I have a mind he should know what a wife and a niece he has got.

Mad. *Il le fera*, matam.

(*Enter a Footman, who speaks to* Mademoiselle *apart.*)

Foot. Mademoiselle, yonder's Mr. Rasor desires to speak with you.

Mad. Tell him, I come presently. — (*Exit Footman.*) Rasor be dare, matam.

Lady Fan. That's fortunate. Well, I'll leave you together. And if you find him stubborn, Mademoiselle — hark you — don't refuse him a few little reasonable liberties, to put him into humor.

Mad. *Laissez-moi faire.*

(*Exit* Lady Fancyful.)

(Rasor *peeps in; and seeing* Lady Fancyful *gone, runs to* Mademoiselle, *takes her about the neck, and kisses her.*)

Mad. How now, confidence!

Ras. How now, modesty!

Mad. Who make you so familiar, sirrah?

Ras. My impudence, hussy.

Mad. Stand off, rogue-face.

Ras. Ah — Mademoiselle — great news at our house.

Mad. Wy, wat be de matter?

Ras. The matter? — why, uptails all's the matter.

Mad. *Tu te moques de moi.*

Ras. Now do you long to know the particulars: the time when — the place where — the manner how. But I won't tell you a word more.

Mad. Nay, den dou kill me, Rasor.

Ras. Come, kiss me, then.

(*Clapping his hands behind him.*)

Mad. Nay, pridee tell me.

Ras. Good b'wy to ye! (*Going.*)

Mad. Hold, hold! I will kiss dee.

(*Kissing him.*)

Ras. So, that's civil. Why now, my pretty pall, my goldfinch, my little water-wagtail — you must know that — Come, kiss me again.

Mad. I won't kiss dee no more.

Ras. Good b'wy to ye!

Mad. *Doucement.* Dare: (*kissing him*) *es tu content?*

Ras. So; now I'll tell thee all. Why, the news is, that Cuckoldom in folio is newly printed; and Matrimony in quarto is just going into the press. Will you buy any books, Mademoiselle?

Mad. *Tu parles comme un libraire,* de devil no understand dee.

Ras. Why then, that I may make myself intelligible to a waiting-woman, I'll speak like a valet-de-chambre. My lady has cuckolded my master.

Mad. *Bon!*

Ras. Which we take very ill from her hands, I can tell her that. We can't yet prove matter of fact upon her.

Mad. *N'importe.*

Ras. But we can prove, that matter of fact had like to have been upon her.

Mad. *Oui dà!*

Ras. For we have such bloody circumstances —

Mad. *Sans doute.*

Ras. That any man of parts may draw tickling conclusions from 'em.

Mad. *Fort bien.*

Ras. We have found a couple of tight, well-built gentlemen stuffed into her ladyship's closet.

Mad. *Le diable!*

Ras. And I, in my particular person, have discovered a most damnable plot, how to persuade my poor master, that all this hide and seek, this will-in-the-wisp, has no other meaning than a Christian marriage for sweet Mrs. Belinda.

Mad. *Un mariage! — Ah les drôlesses!*

Ras. Don't you interrupt me, hussy; 'tis agreed, I say. And my innocent lady, to wriggle herself out at the backdoor of the business, turns marriage-bawd to her niece, and resolves to deliver up her fair body, to be tumbled and mumbled by that young liquorish whipster, Heartfree. Now are you satisfied?

Mad. No.

Ras. Right woman; always gaping for more.

Mad. Dis be all den dat dou know?

Ras. All? Ay, and a great deal too, I think.

Mad. Dou be fool, dou know noting. *Ecoute, mon pauvre Rasor.* Dou see des two eyes? — Des two eyes have see de devil.

Ras. The woman's mad!

Mad. In Spring Garden, dat rogue Constant meet dy lady.

Ras. *Bon!*

Mad. — I'll tell dee no more.

Ras. Nay, prithee, my swan.

Mad. Come, kiss me den.

(*Clapping her hands behind her, as he had done before.*)

Ras. I won't kiss you, not I.

Mad. Adieu!

Ras. Hold! — (*Gives her a hearty kiss.*) Now proceed.

Mad. *Ah, ça!* — I hide myself in one cunning place, where I hear all, and see all. First, dy drunken master come *mal-à-propos;* but de sot no know his own dear wife, so he leave her to her sport. — Den de game begin. De lover say soft ting: de lady look upon de ground. — (*As she speaks,* Rasor *still acts the man, and she the woman.*) He take her by de hand: she turn her head on oder way. Den he squeeze very hard: den she pull — very softly. Den he take her in his arm: den she give him leetel pat. Den he kiss her tétons: den she say — Pish! nay, fie! Den he tremble: den she — sigh. Den he pull her into de arbor: den she pinch him.

Ras. Ay, but not so hard, you baggage you!

Mad. Den he grow bold: she grow weak. He tro her down, *il tombe dessus, le diable assiste, il emporte tout.* — (Rasor *struggles with her, as if he would throw her down.*) Stand off, sirrah.

Ras. You have set me afire, you jade you!

Mad. Den go to de river and quench dyself.

Ras. What an unnatural harlot 'tis.

MAD. Rasor!

(*Looking languishingly on him.*)

RAS. Mademoiselle!

MAD. Dou no love me?

RAS. Not love thee! — More than a Frenchman does soup.

MAD. Den dou will refuse noting dat I bid dee?

RAS. Don't bid me be damned then.

MAD. No, only tell dy master all I have tell dee of dy laty.

RAS. Why, you little malicious strumpet, you; should you like to be served so?

MAD. Dou dispute den? — Adieu!

RAS. Hold! — But why wilt thou make me be such a rogue, my dear?

MAD. *Voilà un vrai Anglais! il est amoreux, et cependant il veut raisonner. Va-t'en au diable!*

RAS. Hold once more! In hopes thou'lt give me up thy body, I resign thee up my soul.

MAD. *Bon! écoute donc* — if dou fail me — I never see de more. — If dou obey me — *je m'abandonne à toi.*

(*She takes him about the neck, and gives him a smacking kiss. Exit* MAD.)

RAS. (*licking his lips*). Not be a rogue? — *Amor vincit omnia!*

(*Exit* RASOR.)

(*Enter* LADY FANCYFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE.)

LADY FAN. Marry, say ye? Will the two things marry?

MAD. *On le va faire*, matam.

LADY FAN. Look you, Mademoiselle, in short, I can't bear it. — No; I find I can't. — If once I see 'em a-bed together, I shall have ten thousand thoughts in my head will make me run distracted. Therefore run and call Rasor back immediately, for something must be done to stop this impertinent wedding. If I can defer it but four-and-twenty hours, I'll make such work about town, with that little pert slut's reputation, he shall as soon marry a witch.

MAD. (*aside*). *La voilà bien intentionnée.*

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE [IV.] — CONSTANT'S *lodgings*

(*Enter* CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE.)

CONST. But what dost think will come of this business?

HEART. 'Tis easier to think what will not come on't.

CONST. What's that?

HEART. A challenge. I know the knight too well for that. His dear body will always prevail upon his noble soul to be quiet.

CONST. But though he dare not challenge me, perhaps he may venture to challenge his wife.

HEART. Not if you whisper him in the ear, you won't have him do't, and there's no other way left that I see. For as drunk as he was, he'll remember you and I were where we should not be; and I don't think him quite blockhead enough yet, to be persuaded we were got into his wife's closet only to peep in her prayer-book.

(*Enter Servant, with a letter.*)

SERV. Sir, here's a letter; a porter brought it. [*Exit.*]

CONST. O ho! here's instructions for us. (*Reads.*) "The accident that has happened has touched our invention to the quick. We would fain come off without your help, but find that's impossible. In a word, the whole business must be thrown upon a matrimonial intrigue between your friend and mine. But if the parties are not fond enough to go quite through with the matter, 'tis sufficient for our turn they own the design. We'll find pretences enough to break the match. Adieu!" — Well, woman for invention! How long would my blockhead have been a producing this! — Hey, Heartfree! What, musing, man? Prithee be cheerful. What say'st thou, friend, to this matrimonial remedy?

HEART. Why I say, it's worse than the disease.

CONST. Here's a fellow for you! There's beauty and money on her side, and love up to the ears on his; and yet —

HEART. And yet, I think, I may reasonably be allowed to boggle at marrying the niece, in the very moment that you are a-debauching the aunt.

Const. Why truly, there may be something in that. But have not you a good opinion enough of your own parts, to believe you could keep a wife to yourself?

Heart. I should have, if I had a good opinion enough of hers, to believe she could do as much by me. For to do 'em right, after all, the wife seldom rambles till the husband shows her the way.

Const. 'Tis true; a man of real worth scarce ever is a cuckold, but by his own fault. Women are not naturally lewd, there must be something to urge 'em to it. They'll cuckold a churl out of revenge; a fool, because they despise him; a beast, because they loathe him. But when they make bold with a man they once had a well-grounded value for, 'tis because they first see themselves neglected by him.

Heart. Nay, were I well assured that I should never grow Sir John, I ne'er should fear Belinda'd play my lady. But our weakness, thou know'st, my friend, consists in that very change we so impudently throw upon (indeed) a steadier and more generous sex.

Const. Why, faith, we are a little impudent in that matter, that's the truth on't. But this is wonderful, to see you grown so warm an advocate for those (but t'other day) you took so much pains to abuse!

Heart. All revolutions run into extremes; the bigot makes the boldest atheist; and the coyest saint, the most extravagant strumpet. But prithee advise me in this good and evil, this life and death, this blessing and cursing, that is set before me. Shall I marry — or die a maid?

Const. Why faith, Heartfree, matrimony is like an army going to engage. Love's the forlorn hope, which is soon cut off; the marriage-knot is the main body, which may stand buff a long long time; and repentance is the rear guard, which rarely gives ground, as long as the main battle has a being.

Heart. Conclusion then: you advise me to whore on, as you do.

Const. That's not concluded yet. For though marriage be a lottery in which there are a wondrous many blanks, yet there is one inestimable lot, in which the only heaven on earth is written. Would your kind fate but guide your hand to that, though I were wrapped in all that luxury itself could clothe me with, I still should envy you.

Heart. And justly, too: for to be capable of loving one, doubtless is better than to possess a thousand. But how far that capacity's in me, alas! I know not.

Const. But you would know?

Heart. I would so.

Const. Matrimony will inform you. Come, one flight of resolution carries you to the land of experience; where, in a very moderate time, you'll know the capacity of your soul and your body both, or I'm mistaken. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene [V.] — Sir John Brute's *house*

(*Enter* Lady Brute *and* Belinda.)

Bel. Well, madam, what answer have you from 'em?

Lady B. That they'll be here this moment. I fancy 'twill end in a wedding. I'm sure he's a fool if it don't. Ten thousand pound, and such a lass as you are, is no contemptible offer to a younger brother. But are not you under strange agitations? Prithee how does your pulse beat?

Bel. High and low, I have much ado to be valiant: [sure it must] feel very strange to go to bed to a man!

Lady B. Um — it does feel a little odd at first, but it will soon grow easy to you.

(*Enter* Constant *and* Heartfree.)

Lady B. Good-morrow, gentlemen. How have you slept after your adventure?

Heart. Some careful thoughts, ladies, on your accounts have kept us waking.

Bel. And some careful thoughts on your own, I believe, have hindered you from sleeping. Pray, how does this matrimonial project relish with you?

Heart. Why faith, e'en as storming

towns does with soldiers, where the hopes of delicious plunder banishes the fear of being knocked on the head.

Bel. Is it then possible after all that you dare think of downright lawful wedlock?

Heart. Madam, you have made me so foolhardy, I dare do anything.

Bel. Then, sir, I challenge you; and matrimony's the spot where I expect you.

Heart. 'Tis enough; I'll not fail. — (*Aside.*) So, now I am in for Hobbes's voyage; a great leap in the dark.

Lady B. Well, gentlemen, this matter being concluded then, have you got your lessons ready? For Sir John is grown such an atheist of late, he'll believe nothing upon easy terms.

Const. We'll find ways to extend his faith, madam. But pray how do you find him this morning?

Lady B. Most lamentably morose, chewing the cud after last night's discovery; of which, however, he had but a confused notion e'en now. But I'm afraid his valet-de-chambre has told him all, for they are very busy together at this moment. When I told him of Belinda's marriage, I had no other answer but a grunt: from which you may draw what conclusions you think fit. — But to your notes, gentlemen, he's here.

(*Enter* Sir John *and* Rasor.)

Const. Good-morrow, sir.

Heart. Good-morrow, Sir John. I'm very sorry my indiscretion should cause so much disorder in your family.

Sir John. Disorders generally come from indiscretions, sir; 'tis no strange thing at all.

Lady B. I hope, my dear, you are satisfied there was no wrong intended you.

Sir John. None, my dove.

Bel. If not, I hope my consent to marry Mr. Heartfree will convince you. For as little as I know of amours, sir, I can assure you, one intrigue is enough to bring four people together, without further mischief.

Sir John. And I know, too, that intrigues tend to procreation of more kinds than one. One intrigue will beget another as soon as beget a son or a daughter.

Const. I am very sorry, sir, to see you still seem unsatisfied with a lady whose more than common virtue, I am sure, were she my wife, should meet a better usage.

Sir John. Sir, if her conduct has put a trick upon her virtue, her virtue's the bubble, but her husband's the loser.

Const. Sir, you have received a sufficient answer already, to justify both her conduct and mine. You'll pardon me for meddling in your family affairs; but I perceive I am the man you are jealous of, and therefore it concerns me.

Sir John. Would it did not concern me, and then I should not care who it concerned!

Const. Well, sir, if truth and reason won't content you, I know but one way more, which, if you think fit, you may take.

Sir John. Lord, sir, you are very hasty. If I had been found at prayers in your wife's closet, I should have allowed you twice as much time to come to yourself in.

Const. Nay, sir, if time be all you want, we have no quarrel.

Heart. [*aside to* Const.]. I told you how the sword would work upon him.

(Sir John *muses.*)

Const. [*aside to* Heart.]. Let him muse; however, I'll lay fifty pound our foreman brings us in, Not Guilty.

Sir John. (*aside*). 'Tis well — 'tis very well. — In spite of that young jade's matrimonial intrigue, I am a downright stinking cuckold. — Here they are — Boo! — (*Putting his hand to his forehead.*) Methinks I could butt with a bull. What the plague did I marry her for? I knew she did not like me; if she had, she would have lain with me; for I would have done so, because I liked her: but that's past, and I have her. And now, what shall I do with her? — If I put my horns in my pocket, she'll grow insolent. — If I don't, that goat there, that stallion, is ready to whip me through the guts. — The debate, then, is reduced to this: shall I die a hero? or live a rascal? — Why, wiser men than I have long since concluded, that a living dog is better than a dead lion. — (*To* Const. *and* Heart.) Gentlemen, now my wine and my passion are governable, I must own, I have never observed anything in my wife's course of life to back me in my jealousy of her: but jealousy's a mark of love; so she need not trouble her head about it, as long as I make no more words on't.

(Lady Fancyful *enters disguised, and addresses* Belinda *apart.*)

Const. I am glad to see your reason rule at last. Give me your hand: I hope you'll look upon me as you are wont.

Sir John. Your humble servant. — (*Aside.*) A wheedling son of a whore!

Heart. And that I may be sure you are friends with me too, pray give me your consent to wed your niece.

Sir John. Sir, you have it with all my heart: damn me if you han't! — (*Aside.*) 'Tis time to get rid of her: a young pert pimp! she'll make an incomparable bawd in a little time.

(*Enter a Servant, who gives* Heartfree *a letter.*)

Bel. Heartfree your husband, say you? 'tis impossible.

Lady Fan. Would to kind heaven it were! but 'tis too true; and in the world there lives not such a wretch. I'm young; and either I have been flattered by my friends, as well as glass, or nature has been kind and generous to me. I had a fortune too was greater far than he could ever hope for. But with my heart, I am robbed of all the rest. I'm slighted and I'm beggared both at once. I have scarce a bare subsistence from the villain, yet dare complain to none; for he has sworn, if e'er 'tis known I am his wife, he'll murder me. (*Weeping.*)

Bel. The traitor!

Lady Fan. I accidentally was told he courted you; charity soon prevailed upon me to prevent your misery; and as you see, I'm still so generous even to him, as not to suffer he should do a thing for which the law might take away his life. (*Weeping.*)

Bel. Poor creature! how I pity her! (*They continue talking aside.*)

Heart. (*aside*). Death and damnation! — Let me read it again! — (*Reads.*) "Though I have a particular reason not to let you know who I am till I see you, yet you'll easily believe 'tis a faithful friend that gives you this advice — I have lain with Belinda." — Good! — "I have a child by her" — Better and better! — "which is now at nurse;" — Heaven be praised! — "and I think the foundation laid for another." — Ha! — Old Truepenny! — "No rack could have tortured this story from me; but friendship has done it. I heard of your design to marry her, and could not see you abused. Make use of my advice, but keep my secret till I ask you for't again. Adieu." (*Exit* Lady Fancyful.)

Const. (*to* Bel.). Come, madam, shall we send for the parson? I doubt here's no business for the lawyer. Younger brothers have nothing to settle but their hearts, and that I believe my friend here has already done, very faithfully.

Bel. (*scornfully*). Are you sure, sir, there are no old mortgages upon it?

Heart. (*coldly*). If you think there are, madam, it mayn't be amiss to defer the marriage till you are sure they are paid off.

Bel. (*aside*). How the galled horse kicks! — (*To* Heart.) We'll defer it as long as you please, sir.

Heart. The more time we take to consider on't, madam, the less apt we shall be to commit oversights; therefore, if you please, we'll put it off for just nine months.

Bel. Guilty consciences make men cowards: I don't wonder you want time to resolve.

Heart. And they make women desperate: I don't wonder you were so quickly determined.

Bel. What does the fellow mean?

Heart. What does the lady mean?

Sir John. Zoons, what do you both mean?

(Heart. *and* Bel. *walk chafing about.*)

RAS. (*aside*). Here's so much sport going to be spoiled, it makes me ready to weep again. A pox o' this impertinent Lady Fancyful, and her plots, and her Frenchwoman, too! She's a whimsical, ill-natured bitch, and when I have got my bones broke in her service, 'tis ten to one but my recompense is a clap; I hear 'em tittering without still. Ecod, I'll e'en go lug 'em both in by the ears, and discover the plot, to secure my pardon.

(*Exit* RAS.)

CONST. Prithee explain, Heartfree.

HEART. A fair deliverance; thank my stars and my friend.

BEL. 'Tis well it went no farther. A base fellow!

LADY B. What can be the meaning of all this?

BEL. What's his meaning, I don't know. But mine is, that if I had married him — I had had no husband.

HEART. And what's her meaning I don't know. But mine is, that if I had married her — I had had wife enough.

SIR JOHN. Your people of wit have got such cramp ways of expressing themselves, they seldom comprehend one another. Pox take you both! will you speak that you may be understood?

([*Re-*]*enter* RASOR *in sackcloth, pulling in* LADY FANCYFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE, [*both masked*].)

RAS. If they won't, here comes an interpreter.

LADY B. Heavens! what have we here?

RAS. A villain — but a repenting villain. Stuff which saints in all ages have been made of.

ALL. Rasor!

LADY B. What means this sudden metamorphose?

RAS. Nothing, without my pardon.

LADY B. What pardon do you want?

RAS. *Imprimis*, your ladyship's; for a damnable lie made upon your spotless virtue, and set to the tune of Spring Garden. — (*To* SIR JOHN.) Next, at my generous master's feet I bend, for interrupting his more noble thoughts with phantoms of disgraceful cuckoldom. — (*To* CONST.) Thirdly, I to this gentleman apply, for making him the hero of my romance. — (*To* HEART.) Fourthly, your pardon, noble sir, I ask, for clandestinely marrying you, without either bidding of banns, bishop's licence, friends' consent — or your own knowledge. — (*To* BEL.) And lastly, to my good young lady's clemency I come, for pretending the corn was sowed in the ground, before ever the plough had been in the field.

SIR JOHN. (*aside*). So that, after all, 'tis a moot point, whether I am a cuckold or not.

BEL. Well, sir, upon condition you confess all, I'll pardon you myself, and try to obtain as much from the rest of the company. But I must know, then, who 'tis has put you upon all this mischief?

RAS. Satan, and his equipage. Woman tempted me, lust weakened me, — and so the devil overcame me: as fell Adam, so fell I.

BEL. Then pray, Mr. Adam, will you make us acquainted with your Eve?

RAS. (*to* MADEM.). Unmask, for the honor of France.

ALL. Mademoiselle!

MAD. Me ask ten tousand pardon of all de good company.

SIR JOHN. Why, this mystery thickens instead of clearing up. — (*To* RASOR.) You son of a whore you, put us out of our pain.

RAS. One moment brings sunshine. — (*Showing* MADEM.) 'Tis true, this is the woman that tempted me. But this is the serpent that tempted the woman; and if my prayers might be heard, her punishment for so doing should be like the serpent's of old. — (*Pulls off* LADY FANCYFUL'S *mask*.) She should lie upon her face all the days of her life.

ALL. Lady Fancyful!

BEL. Impertinent!

LADY B. Ridiculous!

ALL. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

BEL. I hope your ladyship will give me leave to wish you joy, since you have owned your marriage yourself. — Mr. Heartfree, I vow 'twas strangely wicked in you to think of another wife, when you had one already so charming as her ladyship.

All. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Lady Fan. (*aside*). Confusion seize 'em as it seizes me!

Mad. [*aside*]. *Que le diable étouffe ce maraud de Rasor!*

Bel. Your ladyship seems disordered: a breeding qualm, perhaps, Mr. Heartfree: your bottle of Hungary water to your lady. — Why, madam, he stands as unconcerned, as if he were your husband in earnest.

Lady Fan. Your mirth's as nauseous as yourself, Belinda. You think you triumph o'er a rival now. *Hélas! ma pauvre fille.* Where'er I'm rival, there's no cause for mirth. No, my poor wretch, 'tis from another principle I have acted. I knew that thing there would make so perverse a husband, and you so impertinent a wife, that lest your mutual plagues should make you both run mad, I charitably would have broke the match. He, he, he, he, he!

(*Exit laughing affectedly*, Mademoiselle *following her*)

Mad. He, he, he, he, he!

All. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir John (*aside*). Why, now this woman will be married to somebody too.

Bel. Poor creature! what a passion she's in! But I forgive her.

Heart. Since you have so much goodness for her, I hope you'll pardon my offence too, madam.

Bel. There will be no great difficulty in that, since I am guilty of an equal fault.

Heart. Then pardons being passed on all sides, pray let's to church to conclude the day's work.

Const. But before you go, let me treat you, pray, with a song a new-married lady made within this week; it may be of use to you both.

Song

I.

When yielding first to Damon's flame,
  I sunk into his arms;
He swore he'd ever be the same,
  Then rifled all my charms.
But fond of what he'd long desir'd,
  Too greedy of his prey,
My shepherd's flame, alas! expired
  Before the verge of day.

II.

My innocence in lovers' wars
  Reproached his quick defeat;
Confused, ashamed, and bathed in tears,
  I mourned his cold retreat.
At length, Ah, shepherdess! cried he,
  Would you my fire renew,
Alas! you must retreat like me,
  I'm lost if you pursue!

Heart. So, madam; now had the parson but done his business —

Bel. You'd be half weary of your bargain.

Heart. No, sure, I might dispense with one night's lodging.

Bel. I'm ready to try, sir.

Heart. Then let's to church:
  And if it be our chance to disagree —

Bel. Take heed — the surly husband's fate you see.

FINIS

EPILOGUE

BY ANOTHER HAND

SPOKEN BY LADY BRUTE AND BELINDA

Lady B. No Epilogue!
Bel. I swear I know of none.
Lady B. Lord! How shall we excuse it to the town?
Bel. Why, we must e'en say something of our own.
Lady B. Our own! Ay, that must needs be precious stuff.
Bel. I'll lay my life, they'll like it well enough.
Come, faith, begin —
Lady B. Excuse me, after you.
Bel. Nay, pardon me for that, I know my cue.
Lady B. Oh, for the world, I would not have precedence
Bel. O Lord!
Lady B. I swear —
Bel. O fie!
Lady B. I'm all obedience.
First, then, know all, before our doom is fixed,
The third day is for us —
Bel. Nay, and the sixth.
Lady B. We speak not from the poet now, nor is it
His cause — (I want a rhyme)
Bel. That we solicit.
Lady B. Then sure you cannot have the hearts to be severe
And damn us —
Bel. Damn us! Let 'em if they dare.
Lady B. Why, if they should, what punishment remains?
Bel. Eternal exile from behind our scenes.
Lady B. But if they're kind, that sentence we'll recall,
We can be grateful —
Bel. And have wherewithal.
Lady B. But at grand treaties hope not to be trusted,
Before preliminaries are adjusted.
Bel. You know the time, and we appoint this place;
Where, if you please, we'll meet and sign the peace.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

A COMEDY

By WILLIAM CONGREVE

(1700)

Audire est Operæ pretium, procedere recte
Qui mœchis non vultis — Hor. *Sat.* 2. l[ib]. 1.

—— Metuat doti deprensa. — *Ibid.*

PERSONÆ DRAMATIS

Fainall, in love with Mrs. Marwood.
Mirabell, in love with Mrs. Millamant.
Witwoud }
Petulant } followers of Mrs. Millamant.
Sir Wilfull Witwoud, half-brother to Witwoud, and nephew to Lady Wishfort.
Waitwell, servant to Mirabell.

Lady Wishfort, enemy to Mirabell, for having falsely pretended love to her.
Mrs. Millamant, a fine lady, niece to Lady Wishfort, and loves Mirabell.
Mrs. Marwood, friend to Mr. Fainall, and likes Mirabell.
Mrs. Fainall, daughter to Lady Wishfort, and wife to Fainall, formerly friend to Mirabell.
Foible, woman to Lady Wishfort.
Mincing, woman to Mrs. Millamant.
[Betty, waiting-maid at a chocolate-house.
Peg, maid to Lady Wishfort].

Dancers, Footmen, and Attendants.

Scene — London.

The time equal to that of the presentation.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

RALPH, EARL OF MOUNTAGUE, &c.

My Lord,

Whether the world will arraign me of vanity, or not, that I have presumed to dedicate this comedy to your lordship, I am yet in doubt: though it may be it is some degree of vanity even to doubt of it. One who has at any time had the honor of your lordship's conversation, cannot be supposed to think very meanly of that which he would prefer to your perusal: yet it were to incur the imputation of too much sufficiency, to pretend to such a merit as might abide the test of your lordship's censure.

Whatever value may be wanting to this play while yet it is mine, will be sufficiently made up to it, when it is once become your lordship's; and it is my security, that I cannot have overrated it more by my dedication, than your lordship will dignify it by your patronage.

That it succeeded on the stage, was almost beyond my expectation; for but little of it was prepared for that general taste which seems now to be predominant in the palates of our audience.

Those characters which are meant to be ridiculed in most of our comedies, are of fools so gross, that in my humble opinion they should rather disturb than divert the well-natured and reflecting part of an audience; they are rather objects of charity than contempt; and instead of moving our mirth, they ought very often to excite our compassion.

This reflection moved me to design some characters, which should appear ridiculous not so much through a natural folly (which is incorrigible, and therefore not proper for the stage) as through an affected wit; a wit, which at the same time that it is affected, is also false. As there is some difficulty in the formation of a character of this nature, so there is some hazard which attends the progress of its success, upon the stage: for many come to a play, so over-charged with criticism, that they very often let fly their censure, when through their rashness they have mistaken their aim. This I had occasion lately to observe: for this play had been acted two or three days before some of these hasty judges could find the leisure to distinguish betwixt the character of a Witwoud and a Truewit.

I must beg your lordship's pardon for this digression from the true course of this epistle; but that it may not seem altogether impertinent, I beg that I may plead the occasion of it, in part of that excuse of which I stand in need, for recommending this comedy to your protection. It is only by the countenance of your lordship, and the *few* so qualified, that such who write with care and pains can hope to be distinguished: for the prostituted name of *poet* promiscuously levels all that bear it.

Terence, the most correct writer in the world, had a Scipio and a Lelius, if not to assist him, at least to support him in his reputation: and notwithstanding his extraordinary merit, it may be, their countenance was not more than necessary.

The purity of his style, the delicacy of his turns, and the justness of his characters, were all of them beauties, which the greater part of his audience were incapable of tasting: some of the coarsest strokes of Plautus, so severely censured by Horace, were more likely to affect the multitude, such, who come with expectation to laugh at the last act of a play, and are better entertained with two or three unseasonable jests, than with the artful solution of the fable.

As Terence excelled in his performances, so had he great advantages to encourage his undertakings; for he built most on the foundations of Menander: his plots were generally modelled, and his characters ready drawn to his hand. He copied Menander; and Menander had no less light in the formation of his characters, from the observations of Theophrastus, of whom he was a disciple; and Theophrastus it is known was not only the disciple, but the immediate successor of Aristotle, the first and greatest judge of poetry. These were great models to design by; and the further advantage which Terence possessed, towards giving his plays the due ornaments of purity of style and justness of manners, was not less considerable, from the freedom of conversation, which was permitted him with Lelius and Scipio, two of the greatest and most polite men of his age. And indeed, the privilege of such a conversation is the only certain means of attaining to the perfection of dialogue.

If it has happened in any part of this comedy, that I have gained a turn of style, or expression more correct, or at least more corrigible than in those which I have formerly written, I must, with equal pride and gratitude, ascribe it to the honor of your lordship's admitting me into your conversation, and that of a society where everybody else was so well worthy of you, in your retirement last summer from the town: for it was immediately after, that this comedy was written. If I have failed in my performance, it is only to be regretted, where there were so many, not inferior either to a Scipio or a Lelius, that there should be one wanting equal in capacity to a Terence.

If I am not mistaken, poetry is almost the only art which has not yet laid claim to your lordship's patronage. Architecture and painting, to the great honor of our country, have flourished under your influence and protection. In the meantime, poetry, the eldest sister of all arts, and parent of most, seems to have resigned her birthright, by having neglected to pay her duty to your lordship; and by permitting others of a later extraction to prepossess that place in your esteem, to which none can pretend a better title. Poetry, in its nature, is sacred to the good and great; the relation between them is reciprocal, and they are ever propitious to it. It is the privilege of poetry to address to them, and it is their prerogative alone to give it protection.

This received maxim is a general apology for all writers who consecrate their labors to great men: but I could wish at this time, that this address were exempted from the common pretence of all dedications; and that as I can distinguish your lordship even among the most deserving, so this offering might become remarkable by some particular instance of respect, which should assure your lordship that I am, with all due sense of your extreme worthiness and humanity, my lord, your lordship's most obedient and most obliged humble servant,

Will. Congreve.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. BETTERTON

Of those few fools, who with ill stars are cursed,
Sure scribling fools, called poets, fare the worst.
For they're a sort of fools which Fortune makes,
And after she has made 'em fools, forsakes.
With Nature's oafs 'tis quite a diff'rent case,
For Fortune favors all her idiot-race:
In her own nest the cuckow-eggs we find,
O'er which she broods to hatch the changeling-kind.
No portion for her own she has to spare,
So much she dotes on her adopted care.
  Poets are bubbles, by the town drawn in,
Suffered at first some trifling stakes to win:
But what unequal hazards do they run!
Each time they write, they venture all they've won:
The squire that's buttered still, is sure to be undone.
This author, heretofore, has found your favor,
But pleads no merit from his past behavior.
To build on that might prove a vain presumption,
Should grants to poets made, admit resumption:
And in Parnassus he must lose his seat,
If that be found a forfeited estate.
  He owns, with toil, he wrought the following scenes,
But if they're naught ne'er spare him for his pains:
Damn him the more; have no commiseration
For dulness on mature deliberation.
He swears he'll not resent one hissed-off scene,
Nor, like those peevish wits, his play maintain,
Who, to assert their sense, your taste arraign.
Some plot we think he has, and some new thought;
Some humor too, no farce; but that's a fault.
Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect,
For so reformed a town, who dares correct?
To please, this time, has been his sole pretence,
He'll not instruct, lest it should give offence.
Should he by chance a knave or fool expose,
That hurts none here, sure here are none of those.
In short, our play shall (with your leave to show it)
Give you one instance of a passive poet.
Who to your judgments yields all resignation;
So save or damn, after your own discretion.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

ACT I.

Scene — *A chocolate-house*

(Mirabell *and* Fainall, *rising from cards.* Betty *waiting.*)

Mira. You are a fortunate man, Mr. Fainall.

Fain. Have we done?

Mira. What you please. I'll play on to entertain you.

Fain. No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the coldness of a losing gamester lessens the pleasure of the winner: I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune, than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.

Mira. You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining on your pleasures.

Fain. Prithee, why so reserved? Something has put you out of humor.

Mira. Not at all: I happen to be grave to-day; and you are gay; that's all.

Fain. Confess, Millamant and you quarrelled last night, after I left you; my fair cousin has some humors that would tempt the patience of a Stoic. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well received by her, while you were by?

Mira. Witwoud and Petulant; and what was worse, her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius; or to sum up all in her own name, my old Lady Wishfort came in. ——

Fain. Oh, there it is then! — She has a lasting passion for you, and with reason. — What, then my wife was there?

Mira. Yes, and Mrs. Marwood and three or four more, whom I never saw before; seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whispered one another, then complained aloud of the vapors, and after fell into a profound silence.

Fain. They had a mind to be rid of you.

Mira. For which reason I resolved not to stir. At last the good old lady broke through her painful taciturnity, with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant joining in the argument, I rose and with a constrained smile told her I thought nothing was so easy as to know when a visit began to be troublesome; she reddened and I withdrew, without expecting her reply.

Fain. You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in compliance with her aunt.

Mira. She is more mistress of herself, than to be under the necessity of such a resignation.

Fain. What? though half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

Mira. I was then in such a humor, that I should have been better pleased if she had been less discreet.

Fain. Now I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you; last night was one of their cabal-nights; they have 'em three times a week, and meet by turns, at one another's apartments, where they come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week. You and I are excluded; and it was once proposed that all the male sex should be excepted; but somebody moved that to avoid scandal there might be one man of the community; upon which motion Witwoud and Petulant were enrolled members.

Mira. And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My Lady Wishfort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation of mankind; and full of the vigor of fifty-five, declares for a friend and ratafia; and let posterity shift for itself, she'll breed no more.

Fain. The discovery of your sham addresses to her, to conceal your love to her niece, has provoked this separation: had you dissembled better, things might have continued in the state of nature.

Mira. I did as much as man could, with any reasonable conscience; I proceeded to the very last act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a song in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and complement her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carried so far, that I told her the malicious town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden; and when she lay in of a dropsy, persuaded her she was reported to be in labor. The devil's in't, if an old woman is to be flattered further, unless a man should endeavor downright personally to debauch her; and that my virtue forbade me. But for the discovery of this amour, I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs. Marwood.

Fain. What should provoke her to be your enemy, without she has made you advances, which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

Mira. She was always civil to me, till of late. I confess I am not one of those coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice; and think that she who does not refuse 'em everything, can refuse 'em nothing.

Fain. You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and tho' you may have cruelty enough, not to satisfy a lady's longing, you have too much generosity, not to be tender of her honor. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected; and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

Mira. You pursue the argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confesses you are conscious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you, than your wife.

Fain. Fie, fie, friend, if you grow censorious I must leave you. — I'll look upon the gamesters in the next room.

Mira. Who are they?

Fain. Petulant and Witwoud. — Bring me some chocolate. (*Exit.*)

Mira. Betty, what says your clock?

Bet. Turned of the last canonical hour, sir.

Mira. How pertinently the jade answers me! Ha! almost one a clock! (*Looking on his watch.*) Oh, y'are come ——

(*Enter a Servant.*)

Mira. Well, is the grand affair over? You have been something tedious.

Serv. Sir, there's such coupling at Pancras, that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a country dance. Ours was the last couple to lead up; and no hopes appearing of dispatch, besides, the parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his lungs would have failed before it came to our turn; so we drove round to Duke's Place; and there they were riveted in a trice.

Mira. So, so, you are sure they are married.

Serv. Married and bedded, sir: I am witness.

Mira. Have you the certificate?

Serv. Here it is, sir.

Mira. Has the tailor brought Waitwell's clothes home, and the new liveries?

Serv. Yes, sir.

Mira. That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and adjourn the consummation till farther order; bid Waitwell shake his ears, and Dame Partlet rustle up her feathers, and meet me at one a clock by Rosamond's Pond; that I may see her before she returns to her lady; and as you tender your ears be secret. (*Exit Servant.*)

(*Re-enter* Fainall [*and* Betty].)

Fain. Joy of your success, Mirabell; you look pleased.

Mira. Ay; I have been engaged in a matter of some sort of mirth, which is not yet ripe for discovery. I am glad this is not a cabal-night. I wonder, Fainall, that you who are married, and of consequence should be discreet, will suffer your wife to be of such a party.

Fain. Faith, I am not jealous. Besides, most who are engaged are women and relations; and for the men, they are of a kind too contemptible to give scandal.

Mira. I am of another opinion. The greater the coxcomb, always the more the scandal: for a woman who is not a fool, can have but one reason for associating with a man that is.

Fain. Are you jealous as often as you see Witwoud entertained by Millamant?

Mira. Of her understanding I am, if not of her person.

Fain. You do her wrong; for to give her her due, she has wit.

Mira. She has beauty enough to make any man think so; and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

Fain. For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

Mira. And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover; for I like her with all her faults; nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those affectations which in another woman would be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once used me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces; sifted her and separated her failings; I studied 'em, and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large, that I was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her heartily: to which end I so used myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less and less disturbance; 'till in a few days it became habitual to me, to remember 'em without being displeased. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties; and in all probability in a little time longer I shall like 'em as well.

Fain. Marry her, marry her; be half as well acquainted with her charms, as you are with her defects, and my life on't, you are your own man again.

Mira. Say you so?

Fain. I, I, I have experience: I have a wife, and so forth.

(*Enter Messenger.*)

Mess. Is one Squire Witwoud here?

Bet. Yes; what's your business?

Mess. I have a letter for him, from his brother, Sir Wilfull, which I am charged to deliver into his own hands.

Bet. He's in the next room, friend — that way.

(*Exit Messenger.*)

Mira. What, is the chief of that noble family in town, Sir Wilfull Witwoud?

Fain. He is expected to-day. Do you know him?

Mira. I have seen him; he promises to be an extraordinary person; I think you have the honor to be related to him.

Fain. Yes; he is half-brother to this Witwoud by a former wife, who was sister to my Lady Wishfort, my wife's mother. If you marry Millamant, you must call cousins too.

Mira. I had rather be his relation than his acquaintance.

Fain. He comes to town in order to equip himself for travel.

Mira. For travel! Why the man that I mean is above forty.

Fain. No matter for that; 'tis for the honor of England, that all Europe should know we have blockheads of all ages.

Mira. I wonder there is not an act of Parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools.

Fain. By no means, 'tis better as 'tis; 'tis better to trade with a little loss, than to be quite eaten up, with being overstocked.

Mira. Pray, are the follies of this knight-errant, and those of the squire his brother, anything related?

Fain. Not at all; Witwoud grows by the knight, like a medlar grafted on a crab. One will melt in your mouth, and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all pulp, and the other all core.

Mira. So one will be rotten before he be ripe, and the other will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.

Fain. Sir Wilfull is an odd mixture of bashfulness and obstinacy. — But when he's drunk, he's as loving as the monster in *The Tempest;* and much after the same manner. To give t'other his due, he has something of good nature, and does not always want wit.

Mira. Not always; but as often as his memory fails him, and his commonplace of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory, and some few scraps of other folks' wit. He is one whose conversation can never be approved, yet it is now and then to be endured. He has indeed one good quality, he is not exceptious; for he so passionately affects the reputation of understanding raillery, that he will construe an affront into a jest; and call downright rudeness and ill language, satire and fire.

Fain. If you have a mind to finish his picture, you have an opportunity to do it at full length. Behold the original.

(*Enter* Witwoud.)

Wit. Afford me your compassion, my dears; pity me, Fainall, Mirabell, pity me.

Mira. I do from my soul.

Fain. Why, what's the matter?

Wit. No letters for me, Betty?

Bet. Did not a messenger bring you one but now, sir?

Wit. Ay, but no other?

Bet. No, sir.

Wit. That's hard, that's very hard; — a messenger, a mule, a beast of burden, he has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another. And what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author, as an epistle dedicatory.

Mira. A fool, and your brother, Witwoud!

Wit. Ay, ay, my half-brother. My half-brother he is, no nearer upon honor.

Mira. Then 'tis possible he may be but half a fool.

Wit. Good, good, Mirabell, *le drôle!* Good, good, hang him, don't let's talk of him. — Fainall, how does your lady? Gad, I say anything in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure, and the town, a question at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage, I don't know what I say: but she's the best woman in the world.

Fain. 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

Wit. No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall. Your judgment, Mirabell.

Mira. You had better step and ask his wife, if you would be credibly informed.

Wit. Mirabell.

Mira. Ay.

Wit. My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons. — Gad I have forgot what I was going to say to you.

Mira. I thank you heartily, heartily.

Wit. No, but prithee excuse me, — my memory is such a memory.

Mira. Have a care of such apologies, Witwoud; — for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain, either of the spleen or his memory.

Fain. What have you done with Petulant?

Wit. He's reckoning his money, — my money it was; — I have no luck to-day.

Fain. You may allow him to win of you at play; — for you are sure to be too hard for him at repartee: since you monopolize the wit that is between you, the fortune must be his of course.

Mira. I don't find that Petulant confesses the superiority of wit to be your talent, Witwoud.

Wit. Come, come, you are malicious now, and would breed debates. — Petulant's my friend, and a very honest fellow, and a very pretty fellow, and has a smattering — faith and troth, a pretty deal of an odd sort of a small wit: Nay, I'll do him justice. I'm his friend, I won't wrong him. — And if he had any judgment in the world, — he would not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

Fain. You don't take your friend to be over-nicely bred.

Wit. No, no, hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I must own — no more breeding than a bum-baily, that I grant you. — 'Tis pity, faith; the fellow has fire and life.

Mira. What, courage?

Wit. Hum, faith I don't know as to that, — I can't say as to that. — Yes, faith, in a controversy he'll contradict anybody.

Mira. Tho' 'twere a man whom he feared, or a woman whom he loved.

Wit. Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks. — We have all our failings; you're too hard upon him, you are, faith. Let me excuse him, — I can defend most of his faults, except one or two; one he has, that's the truth on't, if he were my brother, I could not acquit him. — That, indeed, I could wish were otherwise.

Mira. Ay, marry, what's that, Witwoud?

Wit. O pardon me! — Expose the infirmities of my friend? — No, my dear, excuse me there.

Fain. What I warrant, he's unsincere, or 'tis some such trifle.

Wit. No, no, what if he be? 'Tis no matter for that, his wit will excuse that: a wit should no more be sincere, than a woman constant; one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty.

Mira. Maybe you think him too positive?

Wit. No, no, his being positive is an incentive to argument, and keeps up conversation.

Fain. Too illiterate.

Wit. That! that's his happiness. — His want of learning gives him the more opportunities to show his natural parts.

Mira. He wants words.

Wit. Ay; but I like him for that now; for his want of words gives me the pleasure very often to explain his meaning.

Fain. He's impudent.

Wit. No, that's not it.

Mira. Vain.

Wit. No.

Mira. What, he speaks unseasonable truths sometimes, because he has not wit enough to invent an evasion!

Wit. Truths! Ha, ha, ha! No, no, since you will have it, — I mean, he never speaks truth at all, — that's all. He will lie like a chambermaid, or a woman of quality's porter. Now that is a fault.

(*Enter Coachman.*)

Coach. Is Master Petulant here, mistress?

Bet. Yes.

Coach. Three gentlewomen in a coach would speak with him.

Fain. O brave Petulant, three!

Bet. I'll tell him.

Coach. You must bring two dishes of chocolate and a glass of cinnamon-water.

[*Exeunt* Betty *and Coachman.*]

Wit. That should be for two fasting strumpets, and a bawd troubled with wind. Now you may know what the three are.

Mira. You are very free with your friend's acquaintance.

Wit. Ay, ay, friendship without freedom is as dull as love without enjoyment, or wine without toasting; but to tell you a secret, these are trulls that he allows coach-hire, and something more by the week, to call on him once a day at public places.

Mira. How!

Wit. You shall see he won't go to 'em because there's no more company here to take notice of him. — Why this is nothing to what he used to do; — before he found out this way, I have known him call for himself ——

Fain. Call for himself? What dost thou mean?

Wit. Mean, why he would slip you out of this chocolate-house, just when you had been talking to him. — As soon as your back was turned — whip he was gone; — then trip to his lodging, clap on a hood and scarf, and mask, slap into a hackney-coach, and drive hither to the door again in a trice; where he would send in for himself, that [is], I mean, call for himself, wait for himself, nay and what's more, not finding himself, sometimes leave a letter for himself.

Mira. I confess this is something extraordinary — I believe he waits for himself now, he is so long a-coming. Oh, I ask his pardon!

(*Enter* Petulant [*and* Betty].)

Bet. Sir, the coach stays.

Pet. Well, well; I come. — 'Sbud, a man had as good be a professed midwife as a professed whoremaster, at this rate; to be knocked up and raised at all hours, and in all places! Pox on 'em, I won't come. — D'ye hear, tell 'em I won't come. — Let 'em snivel and cry their hearts out.

Fain. You are very cruel, Petulant.

Pet. All's one, let it pass — I have a humor to be cruel.

Mira. I hope they are not persons of condition that you use at this rate.

Pet. Condition, condition's a dried fig, if I am not in humor. — By this hand, if they were your — a — a — your what-dee-call-'ems themselves, they must wait or rub off, if I want appetite.

Mira. What-dee-call-'ems! What are they, Witwoud?

Wit. Empresses, my dear — by your what-dee-call-'ems he means sultana queens.

Pet. Ay, Roxolanas.

Mira. Cry you mercy.

Fain. Witwoud says they are ——

Pet. What does he say th'are?

Wit. I — fine ladies I say.

Pet. Pass on, Witwoud. — Hark 'ee, by this light his relations — two co-heiresses his cousins, and an old aunt, that loves catterwauling better than a conventicle.

Wit. Ha, ha, ha! I had a mind to see how the rogue would come off. — Ha, ha, ha! Gad I can't be angry with him, if he said they were my mother and my sisters.

Mira. No!

Wit. No; the rogue's wit and readiness of invention charm me, dear Petulant.

Bet. They are gone, sir, in great anger.

Pet. Enough, let 'em trundle. Anger helps complexion, saves paint.

Fain. This continence is all dissembled; this is in order to have something to brag of the next time he makes court to Millamant, and swear he has abandoned the whole sex for her sake.

Mira. Have you not left off your impudent pretensions there yet? I shall cut your throat, sometime or other, Petulant, about that business.

Pet. Ay, ay, let that pass — there are other throats to be cut —

Mira. Meaning mine, sir?

Pet. Not I — I mean nobody — I know nothing. — But there are uncles and nephews in the world — and they may be rivals. — What then? All's one for that ——

Mira. How! Hark 'ee, Petulant, come hither. — Explain, or I shall call your interpreter.

Pet. Explain! I know nothing. — Why you have an uncle, have you not, lately come to town, and lodges by my Lady Wishfort's?

Mira. True.

Pet. Why that's enough. — You and he are not friends; and if he should marry and have a child, you may be disinherited, ha?

Mira. Where hast thou stumbled upon all this truth?

Pet. All's one for that; why, then say I know something.

Mira. Come, thou art an honest fellow, Petulant, and sha't make love to my mistress, thou sha't, faith. What hast thou heard of my uncle?

Pet. I, nothing I. If throats are to be cut, let swords clash; snug's the word, I shrug and am silent.

Mira. O raillery, raillery. Come, I know thou art in the women's secrets. — What, you're a cabalist; I know you stayed at Millamant's last night, after I went. Was there any mention made of my uncle, or me? Tell me; if thou hadst but good nature equal to thy wit, Petulant, Tony Witwoud, who is now thy competitor in fame, would show as dim by thee as a dead whiting's eye by a pearl of Orient; he would no more be seen by thee, than Mercury is by the sun. Come, I'm sure thou wo't tell me.

Pet. If I do, will you grant me common sense then, for the future?

Mira. Faith, I'll do what I can for thee; and I'll pray that Heaven may grant it thee in the meantime.

Pet. Well, hark'ee.

Fain. Petulant and you both will find Mirabell as warm a rival as a lover.

Wit. Pshaw, pshaw, that she laughs at Petulant is plain. And for my part — but that it is almost a fashion to admire her, I should — hark'ee — to tell you a secret, but let it go no further — between friends, I shall never break my heart for her.

Fain. How!

Wit. She's handsome; but she's a sort of an uncertain woman.

Fain. I thought you had died for her.

Wit. Umh — no ——

Fain. She has wit.

Wit. 'Tis what she will hardly allow anybody else. — Now, demme, I should hate that, if she were as handsome as Cleopatra. Mirabell is not so sure of her as he thinks for.

Fain. Why do you think so?

Wit. We stayed pretty late there last night; and heard something of an uncle to Mirabell, who is lately come to town, — and is between him and the best part of his estate. Mirabell and he are at some distance, as my Lady Wishfort has been told; and you know she hates Mirabell, worse than a Quaker hates a parrot, or than a fishmonger hates a hard frost. Whether this uncle has seen Mrs. Millamant or not, I cannot say; but there were items of such a treaty being in embryo; and if it should come to life, poor Mirabell would be in some sort unfortunately fobbed i'faith.

Fain. 'Tis impossible Millamant should hearken to it.

Wit. Faith, my dear, I can't tell; she's a woman and a kind of a humorist.

Mira. And this is the sum of what you could collect last night.

Pet. The quintessence. Maybe Witwoud knows more, he stayed longer. — Besides, they never mind him; they say anything before him.

Mira. I thought you had been the greatest favorite.

Pet. Ay, *tête à tête;* but not in public, because I make remarks.

Mira. Do you?

Pet. Ay, ay; pox, I'm malicious, man. Now, he's soft, you know; they are not in awe of him. — The fellow's well bred, he's what you call a — what-d'ye-call-'em. A fine gentleman, but he's silly withal.

Mira. I thank you, I know as much as my curiosity requires. Fainall, are you for the Mall?

Fain. Ay, I'll take a turn before dinner.

Wit. Ay, we'll all walk in the Park, the ladies talked of being there.

Mira. I thought you were obliged to watch for your brother Sir Wilfull's arrival.

Wit. No, no, he comes to his aunt's, my Lady Wishfort; pox on him, I shall be troubled with him too; what shall I do with the fool?

Pet. Beg him for his estate; that I may beg you afterwards; and so have but one trouble with you both.

Wit. O rare Petulant, thou art as quick as a fire in a frosty morning; thou shalt to the Mall with us; and we'll be very severe.

Pet. Enough, I'm in a humor to be severe.

Mira. Are you? Pray then walk by yourselves, — let not us be accessary to your putting the ladies out of countenance, with your senseless ribaldry, which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

Pet. What, what? Then let 'em either show their innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else show their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand.

Mira. But hast not thou then sense enough to know that thou ought'st to be most ashamed of thyself, when thou hast put another out of countenance?

Pet. Not I, by this hand — I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt, or ill breeding.

Mira. I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the error of your judgment in defence of your practice.

Where modesty's ill manners, 'tis but fit
That impudence and malice pass for wit.

ACT II.

Scene I. — *St. James's Park*

(*Enter* Mrs. Fainall *and* Mrs. Marwood.)

Mrs. Fain. Ay, ay, dear Marwood, if we will be happy, we must find the means in ourselves, and among ourselves. Men are ever in extremes; either doting or averse. While they are lovers, if they have fire and sense, their jealousies are insupportable: and when they cease to love, (we ought to think at least) they loath; they look upon us with horror and distaste; they meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and as such, fly from us.

Mrs. Mar. True, 'tis an unhappy circumstance of life, that love should ever die before us; and that the man so often should outlive the lover. But say what you will, 'tis better to be left, than never to have been loved. To pass our youth in dull indifference, to refuse the sweets of life because they once must leave us, is as preposterous as to wish to have been born old, because we one day must be old. For my part, my youth may wear and waste, but it shall never rust in my possession.

Mrs. Fain. Then it seems you dissemble an aversion to mankind, only in compliance to my mother's humor.

Mrs. Mar. Certainly. To be free; I have no taste of those insipid dry discourses, with which our sex of force must entertain themselves, apart from men. We may affect endearments to each other, profess eternal friendships, and seem to dote like lovers; but 'tis not in our natures long to persevere. Love will resume his empire in our breasts, and every heart, or soon or late, receive and readmit him as its lawful tyrant.

Mrs. Fain. Bless me, how have I been deceived! Why, you profess a libertine.

Mrs. Mar. You see my friendship by my freedom. Come, be as sincere, acknowledge that your sentiments agree with mine.

Mrs. Fain. Never.

Mrs. Mar. You hate mankind.

Mrs. Fain. Heartily, inveterately.

Mrs. Mar. Your husband.

Mrs. Fain. Most transcendently; ay, though I say it, meritoriously.

Mrs. Mar. Give me your hand upon it.

Mrs. Fain. There.

Mrs. Mar. I join with you; what I have said has been to try you.

Mrs. Fain. Is it possible? Dost thou hate those vipers, men?

Mrs. Mar. I have done hating 'em, and am now come to despise 'em; the next thing I have to do, is eternally to forget 'em.

Mrs. Fain. There spoke the spirit of an Amazon, a Penthesilea.

Mrs. Mar. And yet I am thinking sometimes to carry my aversion further.

Mrs. Fain. How?

Mrs. Mar. Faith, by marrying; if I could but find one that loved me very well, and would be thoroughly sensible of ill usage, I think I should do myself the violence of undergoing the ceremony.

Mrs. Fain. You would not make him a cuckold?

Mrs. Mar. No; but I'd make him believe I did, and that's as bad.

Mrs. Fain. Why, had not you as good do it?

Mrs. Mar. Oh, if he should ever discover it, he would then know the worst, and be out of his pain; but I would have him ever to continue upon the rack of fear and jealousy.

Mrs. Fain. Ingenious mischief! Would thou wert married to Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. Would I were.

Mrs. Fain. You change color.

Mrs. Mar. Because I hate him.

Mrs. Fain. So do I; but I can hear him named. But what reason have you to hate him in particular?

Mrs. Mar. I never loved him; he is, and always was, insufferably proud.

Mrs. Fain. By the reason you give for your aversion, one would think it dissembled; for you have laid a fault to his charge, of which his enemies must acquit him.

Mrs. Mar. Oh, then it seems you are

one of his favorable enemies. Methinks you look a little pale, and now you flush again.

Mrs. Fain. Do I? I think I am a little sick o' the sudden.

Mrs. Mar. What ails you?

Mrs. Fain. My husband. Don't you see him? He turned short upon me unawares, and has almost overcome me.

(*Enter* Fainall *and* Mirabell.)

Mrs. Mar. Ha, ha, ha! he comes opportunely for you.

Mrs. Fain. For you, for he has brought Mirabell with him.

Fain. My dear.

Mrs. Fain. My soul.

Fain. You don't look well to-day, child.

Mrs. Fain. D'ye think so?

Mira. He is the only man that does, madam.

Mrs. Fain. The only man that would tell me so at least; and the only man from whom I could hear it without mortification.

Fain. O my dear, I am satisfied of your tenderness; I know you cannot resent anything from me; especially what is an effect of my concern.

Mrs. Fain. Mr. Mirabell, my mother interrupted you in a pleasant relation last night: I would fain hear it out.

Mira. The persons concerned in that affair have yet a tolerable reputation. — I am afraid Mr. Fainall will be censorious.

Mrs. Fain. He has a humor more prevailing than his curiosity, and will willingly dispence with the hearing of one scandalous story, to avoid giving an occasion to make another by being seen to walk with his wife. This way, Mr. Mirabell, and I dare promise you will oblige us both.

(*Exeunt* Mrs. Fainall *and* Mirabell.)

Fain. Excellent creature! Well, sure if I should live to be rid of my wife, I should be a miserable man.

Mrs. Mar. Ay!

Fain. For having only that one hope, the accomplishment of it, of consequence, must put an end to all my hopes; and what a wretch is he who must survive his hopes! Nothing remains when that day comes, but to sit down and weep like Alexander, when he wanted other worlds to conquer.

Mrs. Mar. Will you not follow 'em?

Fain. Faith, I think not.

Mrs. Mar. Pray let us; I have a reason.

Fain. You are not jealous?

Mrs. Mar. Of whom?

Fain. Of Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. If I am, is it inconsistent with my love to you that I am tender of your honor?

Fain. You would intimate, then, as if there were a fellow-feeling between my wife and him.

Mrs. Mar. I think she does not hate him to that degree she would be thought.

Fain. But he, I fear, is too insensible.

Mrs. Mar. It may be you are deceived.

Fain. It may be so. I do not now begin to apprehend it.

Mrs. Mar. What?

Fain. That I have been deceived, madam, and you are false.

Mrs. Mar. That I am false! What mean you?

Fain. To let you know I see through all your little arts. — Come, you both love him; and both have equally dissembled your aversion. Your mutual jealousies of one another have made you clash till you have both struck fire. I have seen the warm confession reddening on your cheeks, and sparkling from your eyes.

Mrs. Mar. You do me wrong.

Fain. I do not. — 'Twas for my ease to oversee and wilfully neglect the gross advances made him by my wife; that by permitting her to be engaged, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasures; and take you oftener to my arms in full security. But could you think, because the nodding husband would not wake, that e'er the watchful lover slept?

Mrs. Mar. And wherewithal can you reproach me?

Fain. With infidelity, with loving of another, with love of Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis false. I challenge you to show an instance that can confirm your groundless accusation. I hate him.

Fain. And wherefore do you hate him? He is insensible, and your resentment follows his neglect. An instance? The injuries you have done him are a proof: your interposing in his love. What cause had you to make discoveries of his pretended passion? To undeceive the credulous aunt, and be the officious obstacle of his match with Millamant?

Mrs. Mar. My obligations to my lady urged me: I had professed a friendship to her; and could not see her easy nature so abused by that dissembler.

Fain. What, was it conscience then? Professed a friendship! Oh, the pious friendships of the female sex!

Mrs. Mar. More tender, more sincere, and more enduring, than all the vain and empty vows of men, whether professing love to us, or mutual faith to one another.

Fain. Ha, ha, ha! you are my wife's friend too.

Mrs. Mar. Shame and ingratitude! Do you reproach me? You, you upbraid me! Have I been false to her, thro' strict fidelity to you, and sacrificed my friendship to keep my love inviolate? And have you the baseness to charge me with the guilt, unmindful of the merit! To you it should be meritorious, that I have been vicious: and do you reflect that guilt upon me, which should lie buried in your bosom?

Fain. You misinterpret my reproof. I meant but to remind you of the slight account you once could make of strictest ties, when set in competition with your love to me.

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis false, you urged it with deliberate malice — 'twas spoke in scorn, and I never will forgive it.

Fain. Your guilt, not your resentment, begets your rage. If yet you loved, you could forgive a jealousy: but you are stung to find you are discovered.

Mrs. Mar. It shall be all discovered. You too shall be discovered; be sure you shall. I can but be exposed. — If I do it myself I shall prevent your baseness.

Fain. Why, what will you do?

Mrs. Mar. Disclose it to your wife; own what has passed between us.

Fain. Frenzy!

Mrs. Mar. By all my wrongs I'll do't! — I'll publish to the world the injuries you have done me, both in my fame and fortune. With both I trusted you, you bankrupt in honor, as indigent of wealth.

Fain. Your fame I have preserved. Your fortune has been bestowed as the prodigality of your love would have it, in pleasures which we both have shared. Yet, had not you been false, I had e'er this repaid it. — 'Tis true. — Had you permitted Mirabell with Millamant to have stolen their marriage, my lady had been incensed beyond all means of reconcilement: Millamant had forfeited the moiety of her fortune, which then would have descended to my wife; — and wherefore did I marry, but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you?

Mrs. Mar. Deceit and frivolous pretence!

Fain. Death, am I not married? What's pretence? Am I not imprisoned, fettered? Have I not a wife? Nay, a wife that was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow; and would be again a widow, but that I have a heart of proof, and something of a constitution to bustle thro' the ways of wedlock and this world. Will you yet be reconciled to truth and me?

Mrs. Mar. Impossible. Truth and you are inconsistent — I hate you, and shall forever.

Fain. For loving you?

Mrs. Mar. I loath the name of love after such usage; and next to the guilt with which you would asperse me, I scorn you most. Farewell.

Fain. Nay, we must not part thus.

Mrs. Mar. Let me go.

Fain. Come, I'm sorry.

Mrs. Mar. I care not — let me go — break my hands, do — I'd leave 'em to get loose.

Fain. I would not hurt you for the world. Have I no other hold to keep you here?

Mrs. Mar. Well, I have deserved it all.

Fain. You know I love you.

Mrs. Mar. Poor dissembling! — Oh, that — well, it is not yet ——

Fain. What? What is it not? What is it not yet? It is not yet too late ——

Mrs. Mar. No, it is not yet too late — I have that comfort.

Fain. It is, to love another.

Mrs. Mar. But not to loath, detest, abhor mankind, myself and the whole treacherous world.

Fain. Nay, this is extravagance. — Come, I ask your pardon — no tears — I was to blame, I could not love you and be easy in my doubts. — Pray forbear — I believe you; I'm convinced I've done you wrong; and any way, every way will make amends; — I'll hate my wife yet more, damn her, I'll part with her, rob her of all she's worth, and will retire somewhere, anywhere, to another world. I'll marry thee — be pacified. — 'Sdeath, they come, hide your face, your tears. — You have a mask, wear it a moment. This way, this way, be persuaded. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter* Mirabell *and* Mrs. Fainall.)

Mrs. Fain. They are here yet.

Mira. They are turning into the other walk.

Mrs. Fain. While I only hated my husband, I could bear to see him; but since I have despised him, he's too offensive.

Mira. Oh, you should hate with prudence.

Mrs. Fain. Yes, for I have loved with indiscretion.

Mira. You should have just so much disgust for your husband as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover.

Mrs. Fain. You have been the cause that I have loved without bounds, and would you set limits to that aversion, of which you have been the occasion? Why did you make me marry this man?

Mira. Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous actions? To save that idol reputation. If the familiarities of our loves had produced that consequence, of which you were apprehensive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit, but on a husband? I knew Fainall to be a man lavish of his morals, an interested and professing friend, a false and a designing lover; yet one whose wit and outward fair behavior have gained a reputation with the town, enough to make that woman stand excused, who has suffered herself to be won by his addresses. A better man ought not to have been sacrificed to the occasion; a worse had not answered to the purpose. When you are weary of him, you know your remedy.

Mrs. Fain. I ought to stand in some degree of credit with you, Mirabell.

Mira. In justice to you, I have made you privy to my whole design, and put it in your power to ruin or advance my fortune.

Mrs. Fain. Whom have you instructed to represent your pretended uncle?

Mira. Waitwell, my servant.

Mrs. Fain. He is an humble servant to Foible, my mother's woman, and may win her to your interest.

Mira. Care is taken for that. — She is won and worn by this time. They were married this morning.

Mrs. Fain. Who?

Mira. Waitwell and Foible. I would not tempt my servant to betray me by trusting him too far. If your mother, in hopes to ruin me, should consent to marry my pretended uncle, he might, like Mosca in *The Fox*, stand upon terms; so I made him sure before-hand.

Mrs. Fain. So, if my poor mother is caught in a contract, you will discover the imposture betimes; and release her by producing a certificate of her gallant's former marriage.

Mira. Yes, upon condition that she consent to my marriage with her niece, and surrender the moiety of her fortune in her possession.

Mrs. Fain. She talked last night of endeavoring at a match between Millamant and your uncle.

Mira. That was by Foible's direction, and my instruction, that she might seem to carry it more privately.

Mrs. Fain. Well, I have an opinion of your success; for I believe my lady will do anything to get a husband; and when she has this, which you have provided for her, I suppose she will submit to anything to get rid of him.

Mira. Yes, I think the good lady would marry anything that resembled a man, tho' 'twere no more than what a butler could pinch out of a napkin.

Mrs. Fain. Female frailty! We must all come to it, if we live to be old, and feel the craving of a false appetite when the true is decayed.

Mira. An old woman's appetite is depraved like that of a girl. — 'Tis the green-sickness of a second childhood; and like the faint offer of a latter spring, serves but to usher in the fall; and withers in an affected bloom.

Mrs. Fain. Here's your mistress.

(*Enter* Mrs. Millamant, Witwoud, *and* Mincing.)

Mira. Here she comes, i'faith, full sail, with her fan spread and streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders. — Ha, no, I cry her mercy!

Mrs. Fain. I see but one poor empty sculler; and he tows her woman after him.

Mira. You seem to be unattended, madam. — You used to have the *beau-monde* throng after you; and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

Wit. Like moths about a candle. — I had like to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

Milla. Oh, I have denied myself airs to-day. I have walked as fast through the croud ——

Wit. As a favorite in disgrace; and with as few followers.

Milla. Dear Mr. Witwoud, truce with your similitudes: for I am as sick of 'em ——

Wit. As a physician of a good air. — I cannot help it, madam, tho' 'tis against myself.

Milla. Yet again! Mincing, stand between me and his wit.

Wit. Do, Mrs. Mincing, like a screen before a great fire. I confess I do blaze to-day, I am too bright.

Mrs. Fain. But, dear Millamant, why were you so long?

Milla. Long! Lord, have I not made violent haste? I have asked every living thing I met for you; I have enquired after you, as after a new fashion.

Wit. Madam, truce with your similitudes. — No, you met her husband, and did not ask him for her.

Mira. By your leave, Witwoud, that were like enquiring after an old fashion, to ask a husband for his wife.

Wit. Hum, a hit, a hit, a palpable hit, I confess it.

Mrs. Fain. You were dressed before I came abroad.

Milla. Ay, that's true — Oh, but then I had — Mincing, what had I? Why was I so long?

Minc. O mem, your laship stayed to peruse a pecquet of letters.

Milla. Oh, ay, letters — I had letters — I am persecuted with letters — I hate letters. — Nobody knows how to write letters; and yet one has 'em, one does not know why. — They serve one to pin up one's hair.

Wit. Is that the way? Pray, madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters? I find I must keep copies.

Milla. Only with those in verse, Mr. Witwoud. I never pin up my hair with prose. I fancy one's hair would not curl if it were pinned up with prose. I think I tried once, Mincing.

Minc. O mem, I shall never forget it.

Milla. Ay, poor Mincing tift and tift all the morning.

Minc. Till I had the cremp in my fingers, I'll vow, mem. And all to no purpose. But when your laship pins it up with poetry, it sits so pleasant the next day as anything, and is so pure and so crips.

Wit. Indeed, so "crips"?

Minc. You're such a critic, Mr. Witwoud.

Milla. Mirabell, did you take exceptions last night? Oh, ay, and went away. — Now I think on't I'm angry. — No, now I think on't I'm pleased — for I believe I gave you some pain.

Mira. Does that please you?

Milla. Infinitely; I love to give pain.

Mira. You would affect a cruelty which

is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

Milla. Oh, I ask your pardon for that. — One's cruelty is one's power, and when one parts with one's cruelty, one parts with one's power; and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mira. Ay, ay, suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover — and then how vain, how lost a thing you'll be! Nay, 'tis true: you are no longer handsome when you've lost your lover; your beauty dies upon the instant: for beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he bestows your charms — your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet after commendation can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it: for that reflects our praises, rather than your face.

Milla. Oh, the vanity of these men! Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now you must know they could not commend one, if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift — Lord, what is a lover, that it can give? Why one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases: and then if one pleases, one makes more.

Wit. Very pretty. Why you make no more of making of lovers, madam, than of making so many card-matches.

Milla. One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than one's wit to an echo: they can but reflect what we look and say; vain empty things if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

Mira. Yet, to those two vain empty things, you owe two the greatest pleasures of your life.

Milla. How so?

Mira. To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised; and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

Wit. But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait 'till she dies, before it can catch her last words.

Milla. Oh, fiction! Fainall, let us leave these men.

Mira. Draw off Witwoud.

(*Aside to* Mrs. Fainall.)

Mrs. Fain. Immediately; I have a word or two for Mr. Witwoud.

Mira. I would beg a little private audience too. (*Exeunt* Witwoud *and* Mrs. Fainall.) — You had the tyranny to deny me last night; tho' you knew I came to impart a secret to you that concerned my love.

Milla. You saw I was engaged.

Mira. Unkind. You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools; things who visit you from their excessive idleness; bestowing on your easiness that time, which is the incumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they should admire you, they are not capable: or if they were, it should be to you as a mortification; for sure to please a fool is some degree of folly.

Milla. I please myself — besides, sometimes to converse with fools is for my health.

Mira. Your health! Is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools?

Milla. Yes, the vapors; fools are physic for it, next to asafœtida.

Mira. You are not in a course of fools?

Milla. Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom, you'll displease me. — I think I must resolve, after all, not to have you. — We shan't agree.

Mira. Not in our physic, it may be.

Milla. And yet our distemper in all likelihood will be the same; for we shall be sick of one another. I shan't endure to be reprimanded, nor instructed; 'tis so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults — I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you, Mirabell — I'm resolved — I think — You may go — ha, ha, ha! What would you give, that you could help loving me?

Mira. I would give something that you did not know, I could not help it.

Milla. Come, don't look grave then. Well, what do you say to me?

Mira. I say that a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain dealing and sincerity.

Milla. Sententious Mirabell! Prithee, don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapestry hanging.

Mira. You are merry, madam, but I would persuade you for one moment to be serious.

Milla. What, with that face? No, if you keep your countenance, 'tis impossible I should hold mine. Well, after all, there is something very moving in a lovesick face. Ha, ha, ha! — Well, I won't laugh, don't be peevish — Heigho! Now I'll be melancholy, as melancholy as a watch-light. Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me, woo me now — Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well; — I see they are walking away.

Mira. Can you not find in the variety of your disposition one moment ——

Milla. To hear you tell me that Foible's married, and your plot like to speed? — No.

Mira. But how you came to know it ——

Milla. Unless by the help of the devil, you can't imagine; unless she should tell me herself. Which of the two it may have been, I will leave you to consider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me. (*Exit.*)

Mira. I have something more — Gone! — Think of you! To think of a whirlwind, tho' 'twere in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation; a very tranquility of mind and mansion. A fellow that lives in a windmill, has not a more whimsical dwelling than the heart of a man that is lodged in a woman. There is no point of the compass to which they cannot turn, and by which they are not turned, and by one as well as another; for motion, not method, is their occupation. To know this, and yet continue to be in love, is to be made wise from the dictates of reason, and yet persevere to play the fool by the force of instinct. — Oh, here come my pair of turtles! — What, billing so sweetly! Is not Valentine's Day over with you yet?

(*Enter* Waitwell *and* Foible.)

Sirrah Waitwell, why sure you think you were married for your own recreation, and not for my conveniency.

Wait. Your pardon, sir. With submission, we have indeed been solacing in lawful delights; but still with an eye to business, sir. I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your directions as readily as my instructions, sir, your affairs are in a prosperous way.

Mira. Give you joy, Mrs. Foible.

Foib. O-las, sir, I'm so ashamed — I'm afraid my lady has been in a thousand inquietudes for me. But I protest, sir, I made as much haste as I could.

Wait. That she did indeed, sir. It was my fault that she did not make more.

Mira. That I believe.

Foib. But I told my lady as you instructed me, sir. That I had a prospect of seeing Sir Rowland, your uncle; and that I would put her ladyship's picture in my pocket to show him; which I'll be sure to say has made him so enamored of her beauty, that he burns with impatience to lie at her ladyship's feet and worship the original.

Mira. Excellent Foible! Matrimony has made you eloquent in love.

Wait. I think she has profited, sir. I think so.

Foib. You have seen Madam Millamant, sir?

Mira. Yes.

Foib. I told her, sir, because I did not know that you might find an opportunity; she had so much company last night.

Mira. Your diligence will merit more. — In the meantime —— (*Gives money.*)

Foib. O dear sir, your humble servant.

Wait. Spouse.

Mira. Stand off, sir, not a penny. — Go on and prosper, Foible. — The lease shall be made good and the farm stocked, if we succeed.

Foib. I don't question your generosity, sir: and you need not doubt of success. If you have no more commands, sir, I'll be gone; I'm sure my lady is at her toilet, and can't dress 'till I come. — O dear, I'm sure that (*looking out*) was Mrs. Marwood that went by in a mask; if she has seen me with you I'm sure she'll tell my lady. I'll make haste home and prevent her. Your servant, sir. B'w'y, Waitwell. (*Exit* Foible.)

Wait. Sir Rowland, if you please. — The jade's so pert upon her preferment she forgets herself.

Mira. Come, sir, will you endeavor to forget yourself — and transform into Sir Rowland.

Wait. Why, sir; it will be impossible I should remember myself — married, knighted, and attended all in one day! 'Tis enough to make any man forget himself. The difficulty will be how to recover my acquaintance and familiarity with my former self; and fall from my transformation to a reformation into Waitwell. Nay, I shan't be quite the same Waitwell neither — for now I remember me, I am married, and can't be my own man again.

Ay, there's the grief; that's the sad change of life;
To lose my title, and yet keep my wife.
(*Exeunt.*)

ACT III.

Scene — *A room in* Lady Wishfort's *house*

(Lady Wishfort *at her toilet*, Peg *waiting.*)

Lady [Wish.]. Merciful, no news of Foible yet?

Peg. No, madam.

Lady Wish. I have no more patience. — If I have not fretted myself till I am pale again, there's no veracity in me. Fetch me the red — the red, do you hear, sweetheart? An errant ash color, as I'm a person. Look you how this wench stirs! Why dost thou not fetch me a little red? Didst thou not hear me, Mopus?

Peg. The red ratafia does your ladyship mean, or the cherry-brandy?

Lady Wish. Ratafia, fool! No, fool. Not the ratafia, fool — grant me patience! I mean the Spanish paper, idiot, — complexion, darling. Paint, paint, paint, dost thou understand that, changeling, dangling thy hands like bobbins before thee? Why dost thou not stir, puppet? — thou wooden thing upon wires!

Peg. Lord, madam, your ladyship is so impatient. — I cannot come at the paint, madam; Mrs. Foible has locked it up, and carried the key with her.

Lady Wish. A pox take you both! — Fetch me the cherry-brandy then. (*Exit* Peg.) I'm as pale and as faint, I look like Mrs. Qualmsick the curate's wife, that's always breeding — Wench, come, come, wench, what art thou doing, sipping? tasting? Save thee, dost thou not know the bottle?

(*Enter* Peg *with a bottle and china cup.*)

Peg. Madam, I was looking for a cup.

Lady Wish. A cup, save thee, and what a cup hast thou brought! Dost thou take me for a fairy, to drink out of an acorn? Why didst thou not bring thy thimble? Hast thou ne'er a brass thimble clinking in thy pocket with a bit of nutmeg? I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill. — So — again. (*One knocks.*) See who that is. — Set down the bottle first. Here, here, under the table. — What, wouldst thou go with the bottle in thy hand like a tapster? As I'm a person, this wench has lived in an inn upon the road, before she came to me, like Maritornes the Asturian in *Don Quixote*. No Foible yet?

Peg. No, madam, — Mrs. Marwood.

Lady Wish. O Marwood, let her come in. Come in, good Marwood.

(*Enter* Mrs. Marwood.)

Mrs. Mar. I'm surprised to find your ladyship in *dishabillé* at this time of day.

Lady Wish. Foible's a lost thing; has been abroad since morning, and never heard of since.

Mrs. Mar. I saw her but now, as I came masked through the Park, in conference with Mirabell.

Lady Wish. With Mirabell! You call my blood into my face, with mentioning that traitor. She durst not have the confidence. I sent her to negotiate an affair, in which if I'm detected I'm undone. If that wheedling villain has wrought upon Foible to detect me, I'm ruined. Oh, my dear friend, I'm a wretch of wretches if I'm detected.

Mrs. Mar. O madam, you cannot suspect Mrs. Foible's integrity.

Lady Wish. Oh, he carries poison in his tongue that would corrupt integrity itself. If she has given him an opportunity, she has as good as put her integrity into his hands. Ah, dear Marwood, what's integrity to an opportunity? — Hark! I hear her. — Go, you thing, and send her in. (*Exit* Peg.) Dear friend, retire into my closet, that I may examine her with more freedom. — You'll pardon me, dear friend, I can make bold with you. — There are books over the chimney — Quarles and Prynne, and *The Short View of the Stage,* with Bunyan's works, to entertain you. (*Exit* Marwood.)

(*Enter* Foible.)

O Foible, where hast thou been? What hast thou been doing?

Foib. Madam, I have seen the party.

Lady Wish. But what hast thou done?

Foib. Nay, 'tis your ladyship has done, and are to do; I have only promised. But a man so enamored — so transported! Well, here it is, all that is left; all that is not kissed away. — Well, if worshipping of pictures be a sin — poor Sir Rowland, I say.

Lady Wish. The miniature has been counted like — but hast thou not betrayed me, Foible? Hast thou not detected me to that faithless Mirabell? — What hadst thou to do with him in the Park? Answer me, has he got nothing out of thee?

Foib. [*aside*]. So, the devil has been beforehand with me, what shall I say? — Alas, madam, could I help it, if I met that confident thing? Was I in fault? If you had heard how he used me, and all upon your ladyship's account, I'm sure you would not suspect my fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst, I could have borne: but he had a fling at your ladyship too; and then I could not hold: but, i'faith, I gave him his own.

Lady Wish. Me? What did the filthy fellow say?

Foib. O madam, 'tis a shame to say what he said — with his taunts and his fleers, tossing up his nose. Humh (says he), what, you are a hatching some plot (says he), you are so early abroad, or catering (says he), ferreting for some disbanded officer, I warrant — half pay is but thin subsistence (says he). — Well, what pension does your lady propose? Let me see (says he); what, she must come down pretty deep now, she's superannuated (says he) and ——

Lady Wish. Ods my life, I'll have him, I'll have him murdered. I'll have him poisoned. Where does he eat? I'll marry a drawer to have him poisoned in his wine. I'll send for Robin from Lockets — immediately.

Foib. Poison him? Poisoning's too good for him. Starve him, madam, starve him; marry Sir Rowland and get him disinherited. Oh, you would bless yourself, to hear what he said.

Lady Wish. A villain, superannuated!

Foib. Humh (says he), I hear you are laying designs against me too (says he), and Mrs. Millamant is to marry my uncle; — (he does not suspect a word of your ladyship); — but (says he) I'll fit you for that, I warrant you (says he), I'll hamper you for that (says he), you and your old frippery too (says he), I'll handle you ——

Lady Wish. Audacious villain! handle me, would he durst — Frippery? old frippery! Was there ever such a foul-mouthed fellow? I'll be married to-morrow, I'll be contracted to-night.

Foib. The sooner the better, madam.

Lady Wish. Will Sir Rowland be here, say'st thou? When, Foible?

Foib. Incontinently, madam. No new sheriff's wife expects the return of her husband after knighthood, with that impatience in which Sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your ladyship's hand after dinner.

Lady Wish. Frippery? superannuated frippery! I'll frippery the villain; I'll reduce him to frippery and rags, a tatterdemallion! — I hope to see him hung with tatters, like a Long Lane pent-house, or a gibbet-thief. A slander-mouthed railer: I warrant the spendthrift prodigal's in debt as much as the million lottery, or the whole court upon a birthday. I'll spoil his credit with his tailor. Yes, he shall have my niece with her fortune, he shall.

Foib. He! I hope to see him lodge in Ludgate first, and angle into Blackfriars for brass farthings, with an old mitten.

Lady Wish. Ay, dear Foible; thank thee for that, dear Foible. He has put me out of all patience. I shall never recompose my features to receive Sir Rowland with any economy of face. This wretch has fretted me that I am absolutely decayed. Look, Foible.

Foib. Your ladyship has frowned a little too rashly, indeed, madam. There are some cracks discernible in the white varnish.

Lady Wish. Let me see the glass. — Cracks, say'st thou? Why, I am arrantly flayed. — I look like an old peeled wall. Thou must repair me, Foible, before Sir Rowland comes; or I shall never keep up to my picture.

Foib. I warrant you, madam; a little art once made your picture like you; and now a little of the same art must make you like your picture. Your picture must sit for you, madam.

Lady Wish. But art thou sure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? Or will a not fail when he does come? Will he be importunate, Foible, and push? For if he should not be importunate — I shall never break decorums — I shall die with confusion, if I am forced to advance — Oh no, I can never advance — I shall swoon if he should expect advances. No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred, than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy neither. — I won't give him despair — but a little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring.

Foib. A little scorn becomes your ladyship.

Lady Wish. Yes, but tenderness becomes me best — a sort of a dyingness. — You see that picture has a sort of a — ha, Foible? A swimmingness in the eyes — Yes, I'll look so. — My niece affects it; but she wants features. Is Sir Rowland handsome? Let my toilet be removed — I'll dress above. I'll receive Sir Rowland here. Is he handsome? Don't answer me. I won't know: I'll be surprised. I'll be taken by surprise.

Foib. By storm, madam. Sir Rowland's a brisk man.

Lady Wish. Is he! Oh, then he'll importune, if he's a brisk man. I shall save decorums if Sir Rowland importunes. I have a mortal terror at the apprehension of offending against decorums. Oh, I'm glad he's a brisk man! Let my things be removed, good Foible. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* Mrs. Fainall.)

Mrs. Fain. O Foible, I have been in a fright, lest I should come too late. That devil, Marwood, saw you in the Park with Mirabell, and I'm afraid will discover it to my lady.

Foib. Discover what, madam?

Mrs. Fain. Nay, nay, put not on that strange face. I am privy to the whole design, and know that Waitwell, to whom thou wert this morning married, is to personate Mirabell's uncle, and as such, winning my lady, to involve her in those difficulties from which Mirabell only must release her, by his making his conditions to have my cousin and her fortune left to her own disposal.

Foib. O dear madam, I beg your pardon. It was not my confidence in your ladyship that was deficient; but I thought the former good correspondence between your ladyship and Mr. Mirabell, might have hindered his communicating this secret.

Mrs. Fain. Dear Foible, forget that.

Foib. O dear madam, Mr. Mirabell is such a sweet winning gentleman —

but your ladyship is the pattern of generosity. — Sweet lady, to be so good! Mr. Mirabell cannot choose but be grateful. I find your ladyship has his heart still. Now, madam, I can safely tell your ladyship our success; Mrs. Marwood had told my lady, but I warrant I managed myself. I turned it all for the better. I told my lady that Mr. Mirabell railed at her. I laid horrid things to his charge, I'll vow; and my lady is so incensed, that she'll be contracted to Sir Rowland to-night, she says; — I warrant I worked her up, that he may have her for asking for, as they say of a Welsh maidenhead.

Mrs. Fain. O rare Foible!

Foib. Madam, I beg your ladyship to acquaint Mr. Mirabell of his success. I would be seen as little as possible to speak to him, — besides, I believe Madam Marwood watches me. — She has a month's mind; but I know Mr. Mirabell can't abide her. — (*Enter Footman.*) John — remove my lady's toilet. Madam, your servant. My lady is so impatient, I fear she'll come for me, if I stay.

Mrs. Fain. I'll go with you up the back stairs, lest I should meet her. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter* Mrs. Marwood.)

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, Mrs. Engine, is it thus with you? Are you become a go-between of this importance? Yes, I shall watch you. Why this wench is the *passe-partoute*, a very master-key to everybody's strong box. My friend Fainall, have you carried it so swimmingly? I thought there was something in it; but it seems it's over with you. Your loathing is not from a want of appetite then, but from a surfeit. Else you could never be so cool to fall from a principal to be an assistant, to procure for him! A pattern of generosity, that I confess. Well, Mr. Fainall, you have met with your match. — O man, man! Woman, woman! The devil's an ass: if I were a painter, I would draw him like an idiot, a driveler, with a bib and bells. Man should have his head and horns, and woman the rest of him. Poor simple fiend! 'Madam Marwood has a month's mind, but he can't abide her.' — 'Twere better for him you had not been his confessor in that affair, without you could have kept his counsel closer. I shall not prove another pattern of generosity, and stalk for him, till he takes his stand to aim at a fortune; he has not obliged me to that with those excesses of himself; and now I'll have none of him. Here comes the good lady, panting ripe; with a heart full of hope, and a head full of care, like any chemist upon the day of projection.

(*Enter* Lady Wishfort.)

Lady Wish. O dear Marwood, what shall I say for this rude forgetfulness? — But my dear friend is all goodness.

Mrs. Mar. No apologies, dear madam. I have been very well entertained.

Lady Wish. As I'm a person, I am in a very chaos to think I should so forget myself — but I have such an olio of affairs, really I know not what to do. — (*Calls.*) — Foible! — I expect my nephew Sir Wilfull every moment too. — Why, Foible! — He means to travel for improvement.

Mrs. Mar. Methinks Sir Wilfull should rather think of marrying than travelling at his years. I hear he is turned of forty.

Lady Wish. Oh, he's in less danger of being spoiled by his travels. — I am against my nephew's marrying too young. It will be time enough when he comes back, and has acquired discretion to choose for himself.

Mrs. Mar. Methinks Mrs. Millamant and he would make a very fit match. He may travel afterwards. 'Tis a thing very usual with young gentlemen.

Lady Wish. I promise you I have thought on't — and since 'tis your judgment, I'll think on't again. I assure you I will; I value your judgment extremely. On my word, I'll propose it.

(*Enter* Foible.)

Come, come, Foible — I had forgot my nephew will be here before dinner. — I must make haste.

Foib. Mr. Witwoud and Mr. Petulant are come to dine with your ladyship.

Lady Wish. O dear, I can't appear till

I'm dressed. Dear Marwood, shall I be free with you again, and beg you to entertain 'em. I'll make all imaginable haste. Dear friend, excuse me.

(*Exeunt* Lady [Wishfort] *and* Foible.)

(*Enter* Mrs. Millamant *and* Mincing.)

Milla. Sure never anything was so unbred as that odious man. — Marwood, your servant.

Mrs. Mar. You have a color; what's the matter?

Milla. That horrid fellow, Petulant, has provoked me into a flame. — I have broke my fan. — Mincing, lend me yours. — Is not all the powder out of my hair?

Mrs. Mar. No. What has he done?

Milla. Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talked. — Nay, he has said nothing neither; but he has contradicted everything that has been said. For my part, I thought Witwoud and he would have quarrelled.

Minc. I vow, mem, I thought once they would have fit.

Milla. Well, 'tis a lamentable thing, I'll swear, that one has not the liberty of choosing one's acquaintance as one does one's clothes.

Mrs. Mar. If we had the liberty, we should be as weary of one set of acquaintance, though never so good, as we are of one suit, tho' never so fine. A fool and a doily stuff would now and then find days of grace, and be worn for variety.

Milla. I could consent to wear 'em, if they would wear alike; but fools never wear out — they are such *drap-de-Berri* things! — without one could give 'em to one's chambermaid after a day or two.

Mrs. Mar. 'Twere better so indeed. Or what think you of the play-house? A fine gay glossy fool should be given there, like a new masking habit, after the masquerade is over, and we have done with the disguise. For a fool's visit is always a disguise; and never admitted by a woman of wit, but to blind her affair with a lover of sense. If you would but appear bare-faced now, and own Mirabell, you might as easily put off Petulant and Witwoud, as your hood and scarf. And indeed 'tis time, for the town has found it: the secret is grown too big for the pretence. 'Tis like Mrs. Primly's great belly; she may lace it down before, but it burnishes on her hips. Indeed, Millamant, you can no more conceal it, than my Lady Strammel can her face, that goodly face, which in defiance of her Rhenish-wine tea, will not be comprehended in a mask.

Milla. I'll take my death, Marwood, you are more censorious than a decayed beauty, or a discarded toast. — Mincing, tell the men they may come up. My aunt is not dressing. — Their folly is less provoking than your malice, the town has found it. (*Exit* Mincing.) What has it found? That Mirabell loves me is no more a secret, than it is a secret that you discovered it to my aunt, or than the reason why you discovered it is a secret.

Mrs. Mar. You are nettled.

Milla. You're mistaken. Ridiculous!

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, my dear, you'll tear another fan, if you don't mitigate those violent airs.

Milla. O silly! Ha, ha, ha! I could laugh immoderately. Poor Mirabell! His constancy to me has quite destroyed his complaisance for all the world beside. I swear, I never enjoined it him, to be so coy. — If I had the vanity to think he would obey me, I would command him to show more gallantry. — 'Tis hardly well bred to be so particular on one hand, and so insensible on the other. But I despair to prevail, and so let him follow his own way. Ha, ha, ha! Pardon me, dear creature, I must laugh, ha, ha, ha! — though I grant you 'tis a little barbarous, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Mar. What pity 'tis, so much fine raillery, and delivered with so significant gesture, should be so unhappily directed to miscarry.

Milla. Hæ? Dear creature, I ask your pardon — I swear I did not mind you.

Mrs. Mar. Mr. Mirabell and you both may think it a thing impossible, when I shall tell him by telling you ——

Milla. O dear, what? for it is the same thing, if I hear it — ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Mar. That I detest him, hate him, madam.

Milla. O madam, why so do I — and yet the creature loves me, ha, ha, ha! How can one forbear laughing to think of it. — I am a Sybil if I am not amazed to think what he can see in me. I'll take my death, I think you are handsomer — and within a year or two as young. — If you could but stay for me, I should overtake you — but that cannot be. — Well, that thought makes me melancholy. — Now I'll be sad.

Mrs. Mar. Your merry note may be changed sooner than you think.

Milla. D'ye say so? Then I'm resolved I'll have a song to keep up my spirits.

(*Enter* Mincing.)

Minc. The gentlemen stay but to comb, madam; and will wait on you.

Milla. Desire Mrs. —— that is in the next room to sing the song I would have learned yesterday. You shall hear it, madam — not that there's any great matter in it — but 'tis agreeable to my humor.

Song

Set by Mr. John Eccles.

I

Love's but the frailty of the mind,
When 'tis not with ambition joined;
A sickly flame, which if not fed expires;
And feeding, wastes in self-consuming fires.

II

'Tis not to wound a wanton boy
Or am'rous youth, that gives the joy;
But 'tis the glory to have pierced a swain,
For whom inferior beauties sighed in vain.

III

Then I alone the conquest prize,
When I insult a rival's eyes:
If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me.

(*Enter* Petulant *and* Witwoud.)

Milla. Is your animosity composed, gentlemen?

Wit. Raillery, raillery, madam; we have no animosity — we hit off a little wit now and then, but no animosity. — The falling out of wits is like the falling out of lovers. — We agree in the main, like treble and base. Ha, Petulant?

Pet. Ay, in the main. — But when I have a humor to contradict ——

Wit. Ay, when he has a humor to contradict, then I contradict too. What, I know my cue. Then we contradict one another like two battledores; for contradictions beget one another like Jews.

Pet. If he says black's black — if I have a humor to say 'tis blue — let that pass — all's one for that. If I have a humor to prove it, it must be granted.

Wit. Not positively must — but it may — it may.

Pet. Yes, it positively must, upon proof positive.

Wit. Ay, upon proof positive it must; but upon proof presumptive it only may. That's a logical distinction now, madam.

Mrs. Mar. I perceive your debates are of importance and very learnedly handled.

Pet. Importance is one thing, and learning's another; but a debate's a debate, that I assert.

Wit. Petulant's an enemy to learning; he relies altogether on his parts.

Pet. No, I'm no enemy to learning; it hurts not me.

Mrs. Mar. That's a sign indeed it's no enemy to you.

Pet. No, no, it's no enemy to anybody, but them that have it.

Milla. Well, an illiterate man's my aversion. I wonder at the impudence of any illiterate man, to offer to make love.

Wit. That I confess I wonder at too.

Milla. Ah! to marry an ignorant that can hardly read or write!

Pet. Why should a man be ever the further from being married tho' he can't read, any more than he is from being hanged? The ordinary's paid for setting the psalm, and the parish-priest for reading the ceremony. And for the rest which is to follow in both cases, a man may do it without book — so all's one for that.

Milla. D'ye hear the creature? Lord, here's company, I'll be gone.

(*Exeunt* Millamant *and* Mincing.)

Wit. In the name of Bartlemew and his fair, what have we here?

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis your brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

Wit. Not I — Yes, I think it is he — I've almost forgot him; I have not seen him since the Revolution.

(*Enter* Sir Wilfull Witwoud *in a country riding habit, and Servant to* Lady Wishfort.)

Serv. Sir, my lady's dressing. Here's company; if you please to walk in, in the meantime.

Sir Wil. Dressing! What, it's but morning here I warrant with you in London; we should count it towards afternoon in our parts, down in Shropshire. — Why then belike my aunt han't dined yet— ha, friend?

Serv. Your aunt, sir?

Sir Wil. My aunt, sir, yes, my aunt, sir, and your lady, sir; your lady is my aunt, sir. — Why, what, do'st thou not know me, friend? Why, then send somebody hither that does. How long hast thou lived with thy lady, fellow, ha?

Serv. A week, sir; longer than anybody in the house, except my lady's woman.

Sir Wil. Why then belike thou dost not know thy lady, if thou see'st her, ha, friend?

Serv. Why truly, sir, I cannot safely swear to her face in a morning, before she is dressed. 'Tis like I may give a shrewd guess at her by this time.

Sir Wil. Well, prithee try what thou canst do; if thou canst not guess, enquire her out, do'st hear, fellow? And tell her, her nephew, Sir Wilfull Witwoud, is in the house.

Serv. I shall, sir.

Sir Wil. Hold ye, hear me, friend; a word with you in your ear; prithee who are these gallants?

Serv. Really, sir, I can't tell; here come so many here, 'tis hard to know 'em all.

(*Exit Servant.*)

Sir Wil. Oons, this fellow knows less than a starling; I don't think a' knows his own name.

Mrs. Mar. Mr. Witwoud, your brother is not behindhand in forgetfulness — I fancy he has forgot you too.

Wit. I hope so — the devil take him that remembers first, I say.

Sir Wil. Save you, gentlemen and lady.

Mrs. Mar. For shame, Mr. Witwoud; why won't you speak to him? — And you, sir.

Wit. Petulant, speak.

Pet. And you, sir.

Sir Wil. No offence, I hope.

(*Salutes* Marwood.)

Mrs. Mar. No, sure, sir.

Wit. This is a vile dog, I see that already. No offence! Ha, ha, ha! To him; to him, Petulant, smoke him.

Pet. It seems as if you had come a journey, sir; hem, hem. (*Surveying him round.*)

Sir Wil. Very likely, sir, that it may seem so.

Pet. No offence, I hope, sir.

Wit. Smoke the boots, the boots; Petulant, the boots; ha, ha, ha!

Sir Wil. Maybe not, sir; thereafter as 'tis meant, sir.

Pet. Sir, I presume upon the information of your boots.

Sir Wil. Why, 'tis like you may, sir: if you are not satisfied with the information of my boots, sir, if you will step to the stable, you may enquire further of my horse, sir.

Pet. Your horse, sir! Your horse is an ass, sir!

Sir Wil. Do you speak by way of offence, sir?

Mrs. Mar. The gentleman's merry, that's all, sir. — [*Aside.*] S'life, we shall have a quarrel betwixt an horse and an ass, before they find one another out. — [*Aloud.*] You must not take anything amiss from your friends, sir. You are among your friends here, tho' it may be you don't know it. — If I am not mistaken, you are Sir Wilfull Witwoud.

Sir Wil. Right, lady; I am Sir Wilfull Witwoud, so I write myself; no offence to anybody, I hope; and nephew to the Lady Wishfort of this mansion.

Mrs. Mar. Don't you know this gentleman, sir?

Sir Wil. Hum! What, sure 'tis not. — Yea, by'r lady, but 'tis. — 'Sheart, I know not whether 'tis or no. — Yea, but 'tis, by the Wrekin. Brother Antony! What, Tony, i'faith! What, dost thou not know me? By'r Lady, nor I thee, thou art so becravated, and so beperriwiged. — 'Sheart, why dost not speak? Art thou o'erjoyed?

Wit. Odso, brother, is it you? Your servant, brother.

Sir Wil. Your servant! Why yours, sir. Your servant again. — 'Sheart, and your friend and servant to that — and a — (*puff*) and a flap-dragon for your service, sir, and a hare's foot, and a hare's scut for your service, sir, an you be so cold and so courtly!

Wit. No offence, I hope, brother.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, sir, but there is, and much offence. — A pox, is this your Inns o' Court breeding, not to know your friends and your relations, your elders, and your betters?

Wit. Why, brother Wilfull of Salop, you may be as short as a Shrewsbury cake, if you please. But I tell you 'tis not modish to know relations in town. You think you're in the country, where great lubberly brothers slabber and kiss one another when they meet, like a call of sergeants. — 'Tis not the fashion here; 'tis not indeed, dear brother.

Sir Wil. The fashion's a fool; and you're a fop, dear brother. 'Sheart, I've suspected this. — By'r Lady, I conjectured you were a fop, since you began to change the style of your letters, and write in a scrap of paper gilt round the edges, no broader than a *subpœna*. I might expect this when you left off "Honored Brother," and "hoping you are in good health," and so forth — to begin with a "Rat me, knight, I'm so sick of a last night's debauch" — Od's heart, and then tell a familiar tale of a cock and a bull, and a whore and a bottle, and so conclude. — You could write news before you were out of your time, when you lived with honest Pumlpe Nose, the attorney of Furnival's Inn. — You could intreat to be remembered then to your friends round the rekin. We could have gazettes then, and Dawks's Letter, and the Weekly Bill, 'till of late days.

Pet. 'Slife, Witwoud, were you ever an attorney's clerk? Of the family of the Furnivals. Ha, ha, ha!

Wit. Ay, ay, but that was for a while. Not long, not long. Pshaw! I was not in my own power then. An orphan, and this fellow was my guardian; ay, ay, I was glad to consent to that man to come to London. He had the disposal of me then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound prentice to a felt-maker in Shrewsbury; this fellow would have bound me to a maker of felts.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, and better than to be bound to a maker of fops; where, I suppose, you have served your time; and now you may set up for yourself.

Mrs. Mar. You intend to travel, sir, as I'm informed.

Sir Wil. Belike I may, madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt seas, if my mind hold.

Pet. And the wind serve.

Sir Wil. Serve or not serve, I shan't ask license of you, sir; nor the weather-cock your companion. I direct my discourse to the lady, sir. 'Tis like my aunt may have told you, madam — Yes, I have settled my concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see foreign parts. If an how that the peace holds, whereby that is, taxes abate.

Mrs. Mar. I thought you had designed for France at all adventures.

Sir Wil. I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a resolution, — because when I make it I keep it. I don't stand shill I, shall I, then; if I say't, I'll do't: but I have thoughts to tarry a small matter in town, to learn somewhat of your lingo first, before I cross the seas. I'd gladly have a spice of your French as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries.

Mrs. Mar. Here's an academy in town for that use.

Sir Wil. There is? 'Tis like there may.

Mrs. Mar. No doubt you will return very much improved.

Wit. Yes, refined, like a Dutch skipper from a whale-fishing.

(*Enter* Lady Wishfort *and* Fainall.)

Lady [Wish.]. Nephew, you are welcome.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.

Fain. Sir Wilfull, your most faithful servant.

Sir Wil. Cousin Fainall, give me your hand.

Lady Wish. Cousin Witwoud, your servant; Mr. Petulant, your servant. — Nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink anything after your journey, nephew, before you eat? Dinner's almost ready.

Sir Wil. I'm very well, I thank you, aunt — however, I thank you for your courteous offer. 'Sheart, I was afraid you would have been in the fashion too, and have remembered to have forgot your relations. Here's your Cousin Tony, belike, I mayn't call him brother for fear of offence.

Lady Wish. Oh, he's a rallier, nephew — my cousin's a wit; and your great wits always rally their best friends to choose. When you have been abroad, nephew, you'll understand raillery better.

(Fain. *and* Mrs. Marwood *talk apart.*)

Sir Wil. Why then let him hold his tongue in the meantime; and rail when that day comes.

(*Enter* Mincing.)

Minc. Mem, I come to acquaint your laship that dinner is impatient.

Sir Wil. Impatient? Why then belike it won't stay till I pull off my boots. Sweetheart, can you help me to a pair of slippers? — My man's with his horses, I warrant.

Lady Wish. Fie, fie, nephew, you would not pull off your boots here. — Go down into the hall — dinner shall stay for you. — My nephew's a little unbred, you'll pardon him, madam. — Gentlemen, will you walk? Marwood?

Mrs. Mar. I'll follow you, madam, — before Sir Wilfull is ready.

(*Manent* Mrs. Marwood *and* Fainall.)

Fain. Why then Foible's a bawd, an errant, rank, match-making bawd. And I, it seems, am a husband, a rank husband; and my wife a very errant, rank wife, — all in the way of the world. 'Sdeath, to be an anticipated cuckold, a cuckold in embryo! Sure I was born with budding antlers like a young satyr, or a citizen's child. 'Sdeath, to be outwitted, to be out-jilted — out-matrimonied! — If I had kept my speed like a stag, 'twere somewhat, — but to crawl after, with my horns like a snail, and be outstripped by my wife — 'tis scurvy wedlock.

Mrs. Mar. Then shake it off, you have often wished for an opportunity to part; — and now you have it. But first prevent their plot, — the half of Millamant's fortune is too considerable to be parted with, to a foe, to Mirabell.

Fain. Damn him, that had been mine — had you not made that fond discovery — that had been forfeited, had they been married. My wife had added lustre to my horns, by that increase of fortune; — I could have worn 'em tipt with gold, though my forehead had been furnished like a deputy-lieutenant's hall.

Mrs. Mar. They may prove a cap of maintenance to you still, if you can away with your wife. And she's no worse than when you had her — I dare swear she had given up her game, before she was married.

Fain. Hum! That may be. —— She might throw up her cards; but I'll be hanged if she did not put Pam in her pocket.

Mrs. Mar. You married her to keep you; and if you can contrive to have her keep you better than you expected, why should you not keep her longer than you intended?

Fain. The means, the means.

Mrs. Mar. Discover to my lady your wife's conduct; threaten to part with her.

— My lady loves her, and will come to any composition to save her reputation. Take the opportunity of breaking it, just upon the discovery of this imposture. My lady will be enraged beyond bounds, and sacrifice niece, and fortune, and all at that conjuncture. And let me alone to keep her warm; if she should flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

Fain. Faith, this has an appearance.

Mrs. Mar. I'm sorry I hinted to my lady to endeavor a match between Millamant and Sir Wilfull; that may be an obstacle.

Fain. Oh, for that matter leave me to manage him; I'll disable him for that; he will drink like a Dane: after dinner, I'll set his hand in.

Mrs. Mar. Well, how do you stand affected towards your lady?

Fain. Why, faith, I'm thinking of it. — Let me see — I am married already, so that's over; — my wife has played the jade with me — well, that's over too; — I never loved her, or if I had, why that would have been over too by this time. — Jealous of her I cannot be, for I am certain; so there's an end of jealousy. Weary of her, I am, and shall be — no, there's no end of that; no, no, that were too much to hope. Thus far concerning my repose. Now for my reputation. — As to my own, I married not for it; so that's out of the question. — And as to my part in my wife's — why she had parted with hers before; so bringing none to me, she can take none from me; 'tis against all rule of play, that I should lose to one who has not wherewithal to stake.

Mrs. Mar. Besides, you forget, marriage is honorable.

Fain. Hum! Faith, and that's well thought on; marriage is honorable, as you say; and if so, wherefore should cuckoldom be a discredit, being derived from so honorable a root?

Mrs. Mar. Nay, I know not; if the root be honorable, why not the branches?

Fain. So, so, why this point's clear. — Well, how do we proceed?

Mrs. Mar. I will contrive a letter which shall be delivered to my lady at the time when that rascal who is to act Sir Rowland is with her. It shall come as from an unknown hand — for the less I appear to know of the truth, the better I can play the incendiary. Besides, I would not have Foible provoked if I could help it, — because you know she knows some passages. — Nay, I expect all will come out — but let the mine be sprung first, and then I care not if I'm discovered.

Fain. If the worst come to the worst, I'll turn my wife out to grass. — I have already a deed of settlement of the best part of her estate; which I wheedled out of her; and that you shall partake at least.

Mrs. Mar. I hope you are convinced that I hate Mirabell; now you'll be no more jealous.

Fain. Jealous, no, — by this kiss — let husbands be jealous; but let the lover still believe; or if he doubt, let it be only to endear his pleasure, and prepare the joy that follows, when he proves his mistress true; but let husbands' doubts convert to endless jealousy; or if they have belief, let it corrupt to superstition, and blind credulity. I am single, and will herd no more with 'em. True, I wear the badge, but I'll disown the order. And since I take my leave of 'em, I care not if I leave 'em a common motto to their common crest:

All husbands must, or pain, or shame, endure;
The wise too jealous are, fools too secure. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

Scene — *Scene continues*

(Lady Wishfort *and* Foible.)

Lady [Wish.]. Is Sir Rowland coming, say'st thou, Foible? and are things in order?

Foib. Yes, madam. I have put wax-lights in the sconces, and placed the footmen in a row in the hall, in their best liveries, with the coachman and postilion to fill up the equipage.

Lady Wish. Have you pulvilled the coachman and postilion, that they may not stink of the stable, when Sir Rowland comes by?

Foib. Yes, madam.

Lady Wish. And are the dancers and the music ready, that he may be entertained in all points with correspondence to his passion?

Foib. All is ready, madam.

Lady Wish. And — well — and how do I look, Foible?

Foib. Most killing well, madam.

Lady Wish. Well, and how shall I receive him? In what figure shall I give his heart the first impression? There is a great deal in the first impression. Shall I sit? — No, I won't sit — I'll walk — ay, I'll walk from the door upon his entrance; and then turn full upon him. — No, that will be too sudden. I'll lie — ay, I'll lie down — I'll receive him in my little dressing-room, there's a couch — yes, yes, I'll give the first impression on a couch. — I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one elbow, with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way — yes — and then as soon as he appears, start, ay, start and be surprised, and rise to meet him in a pretty disorder — yes — oh, nothing is more alluring than a levee from a couch in some confusion. — It shows the foot to advantage, and furnishes with blushes, and re-composing airs beyond comparison. Hark! There's a coach.

Foib. 'Tis he, madam.

Lady Wish. O dear, has my nephew made his addresses to Millamant? I ordered him.

Foib. Sir Wilfull is set in to drinking, madam, in the parlor.

Lady Wish. Ods my life, I'll send him to her. Call her down, Foible; bring her hither. I'll send him as I go. — When they are together, then come to me, Foible, that I may not be too long alone with Sir Rowland. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* Mrs. Millamant *and* Mrs. Fainall.)

Foib. Madam, I stayed here, to tell your ladyship that Mr. Mirabell has waited this half-hour for an opportunity to talk with you — though my lady's orders were to leave you and Sir Wilfull together. Shall I tell Mr. Mirabell that you are at leisure?

Milla. No — what would the dear man have? I am thoughtful, and would amuse myself, — bid him come another time. (*Repeating and walking about.*)

There never yet was woman made,
Nor shall, but to be cursed.

That's hard!

Mrs. Fain. You are very fond of Sir John Suckling to-day, Millamant, and the poets.

Milla. He? Ay, and filthy verses — so I am.

Foib. Sir Wilfull is coming, madam. Shall I send Mr. Mirabell away?

Milla. Ay, if you please, Foible, send him away, — or send him hither, — just as you will, dear Foible. — I think I'll see him — Shall I? Ay, let the wretch come. (*Repeating.*)

Thyrsis, a youth of the inspired train.

Dear Fainall, entertain Sir Wilfull — thou hast philosophy to undergo a fool, thou art married, and hast patience. — I would confer with my own thoughts.

Mrs. Fain. I am obliged to you, that you would make me your proxy in this affair; but I have business of my own.

(*Enter* Sir Wilfull.)

Mrs. Fain. O Sir Wilfull, you are come at the critical instant. There's your mistress up to the ears in love and contemplation; pursue your point, now or never.

Sir Wil. Yes; my aunt will have it so, — I would gladly have been encouraged with a bottle or two, because I'm somewhat wary at first, before I am acquainted. — (*This while* Milla. *walks about repeating to herself.*) But I hope, after a time, I shall break my mind — that is, upon further acquaintance. — So for the present, cousin, I'll take my leave — if so be you'll be so kind to make my excuse, I'll return to my company ——

Mrs. Fain. Oh, fie, Sir Wilfull! What, you must not be daunted.

Sir Wil. Daunted, no, that's not it, it is not so much for that — for if so be that I set on't, I'll do't. But only for the present, 'tis sufficient till further acquaintance, that's all — your servant.

Mrs. Fain. Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so favorable an opportunity, if I can help it. I'll leave you together, and lock the door. (*Exit.*)

Sir Wil. Nay, nay, cousin, — I have forgot my gloves. — What d'ye do? 'Sheart, a' has locked the door indeed, I think. — Nay, Cousin Fainall, open the door. — Pshaw, what a vixen trick is this? — Nay, now a' has seen me too. — Cousin, I made bold to pass through as it were — I think this door's enchanted ——

Milla. (*repeating*).

I prithee spare me, gentle boy,
Press me no more for that slight toy.

Sir Wil. Anan? Cousin, your servant.

Milla.

That foolish trifle of a heart ——

Sir Wilfull!

Sir Wil. Yes — your servant. No offence, I hope, cousin.

Milla. (*repeating*).

I swear it will not do its part,
Though thou dost thine, employ'st thy power and art.

Natural, easy Suckling!

Sir Wil. Anan? Suckling? No such suckling neither, cousin, nor stripling: I thank Heaven, I'm no minor.

Milla. Ah, rustic, ruder than Gothic!

Sir Wil. Well, well, I shall understand your lingo one of these days, cousin; in the meanwhile I must answer in plain English.

Milla. Have you any business with me, Sir Wilfull?

Sir Wil. Not at present, cousin. — Yes, I made bold to see, to come and know if that how you were disposed to fetch a walk this evening, if so be that I might not be troublesome, I would have sought a walk with you.

Milla. A walk? What then?

Sir Wil. Nay, nothing — only for the walk's sake, that's all ——

Milla. I nauseate walking; 'tis a country diversion; I loath the country and everything that relates to it.

Sir Wil. Indeed! Hah! Look ye, look ye, you do? Nay, 'tis like you may. — Here are choice of pastimes here in town, as plays and the like; that must be confessed indeed ——

Milla. *Ah l'étourdie!* I hate the town too.

Sir Wil. Dear heart, that's much. — Hah! that you should hate 'em both! Hah! 'tis like you may; there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away with the country, — 'tis like you may be one of those, cousin.

Milla. Ha, ha, ha! Yes, 'tis like I may. — You have nothing further to say to me?

Sir Wil. Not at present, cousin. — 'Tis like when I have an opportunity to be more private, — I may break my mind in some measure — I conjecture you partly guess. — However, that's as time shall try, — but spare to speak and spare to speed, as they say.

Milla. If it is of no great importance, Sir Wilfull, you will oblige me to leave me: I have just now a little business ——

Sir Wil. Enough, enough, cousin: yes, yes, all a case. — When you're disposed, when you're disposed. Now's as well as another time; and another time as well as now. All's one for that, — yes, yes, if your concerns call you, there's no haste; it will keep cold as they say. — Cousin, your servant. — I think this door's locked.

Milla. You may go this way, sir.

Sir Wil. Your servant, then with your leave I'll return to my company.

Milla. Ay, ay; ha, ha, ha!

Like Phœbus sung the no less am'rous boy.

(*Enter* Mirabell.)

Mira.

Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy.

Do you lock yourself up from me, to make my search more curious? Or is this pretty artifice contrived, to signify that here the chase must end, and my pursuit be crowned, for you can fly no further?

Milla. Vanity! No — I'll fly and be followed to the last moment, though I am upon the very verge of matrimony. I expect you should solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the grate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last, nay, and afterwards.

Mira. What, after the last?

Milla. Oh, I should think I was poor and had nothing to bestow, if I were reduced to an inglorious ease, and freed from the agreeable fatigues of solicitation.

Mira. But do not you know, that when favors are conferred upon instant and tedious solicitation, that they diminish in their value, and that both the giver loses the grace, and the receiver lessens his pleasure?

Milla. It may be in things of common application; but never sure in love. Oh, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air, independent on the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature, as the saucy look of an assured man, confident of success. The pedantic arrogance of a very husband has not so pragmatical an air. Ah! I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

Mira. Would you have 'em both before marriage? Or will you be contented with the first now, and stay for the other till after grace?

Milla. Ah, don't be impertinent. — My dear liberty, shall I leave thee? My faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay-h, adieu — my morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, all ye *douceurs*, ye *someils du matin*, adieu? — I can't do't, 'tis more than impossible — positively, Mirabell, I'll lie abed in a morning as long as I please.

Mira. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

Milla. Ah! Idle creature, get up when you will — And d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

Mira. Names!

Milla. Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomly familiar — I shall never bear that. — Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my Lady Fadler and Sir Francis: nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers; and then never be seen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well bred: let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while; and as well bred as if we were not married at all.

Mira. Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

Milla. Trifles, — as liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please; and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance; or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please, dine in my dressing-room when I'm out of humor, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

Mira. Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions — that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?

Milla. You have free leave, propose your utmost, speak and spare not.

MIRA. I thank you. *Inprimis* then, I covenant that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confidant, or intimate of your own sex; no she-friend to screen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual secrecy. No decoy-duck to wheedle you a fop — scrambling to the play in a mask — then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out — and rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic which you had, to pick me up and prove my constancy.

MILLA. Detestable *inprimis!* I go to the play in a mask!

MIRA. *Item,* I article, that you continue to like your own face as long as I shall; and while it passes current with me, that you endeavor not to new-coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oiled-skins and I know not what — hog's bones, hare's gall, pig-water, and the marrow of a roasted cat. In short, I forbid all commerce with the gentlewoman in what-d'ye-call-it Court. *Item,* I shut my doors against all bauds with baskets, and pennyworths of muslin, china, fans, atlases, etc. — *Item,* when you shall be breeding ——

MILLA. Ah! name it not.

MIRA. Which may be presumed, with a blessing on our endeavors ——

MILLA. Odious endeavors!

MIRA. I denounce against all strait lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mould my boy's head like a sugar-loaf; and instead of a man-child, make me father to a crooked billet. Lastly, to the dominion of the tea-table I submit, — but with proviso, that you exceed not in your province; but restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks, as tea, chocolate, and coffee, as likewise to genuine and authorized tea-table talk — such as mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth — but that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea-table, as orange-brandy, all aniseed, cinnamon, citron, and Barbadoes waters, together with ratafia and the most noble spirit of clary, — but for cowslip-wine, poppy water, and all dormitives, those I allow. — These provisos admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

MILLA. O horrid provisos! filthy strong waters! I toast fellows, odious men! I hate your odious provisos.

MIRA. Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

(*Enter* MRS. FAINALL.)

MILLA. Fainall, what shall I do? Shall I have him? I think I must have him.

MRS. FAIN. Ay, ay, take him, take him, what should you do?

MILLA. Well then — I'll take my death, I'm in a horrid fright — Fainall, I shall never say it — well — I think — I'll endure you.

MRS. FAIN. Fie, fie! have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms: for I am sure you have a mind to him.

MILLA. Are you? I think I have — and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too. — Well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you — I won't be kissed, nor I won't be thanked — here, kiss my hand though. — So, hold your tongue now, don't say a word.

MRS. FAIN. Mirabell, there's a necessity for your obedience; — you have neither time to talk nor stay. My mother is coming; and in my conscience, if she should see you, would fall into fits, and maybe not recover time enough to return to Sir Rowland, who, as Foible tells me, is in a fair way to succeed. Therefore spare your ecstasies for another occasion, and slip down the backstairs, where Foible waits to consult you.

MILLA. Ay, go, go. In the meantime I suppose you have said something to please me.

MIRA. I am all obedience.

(*Exit* MIRA.)

Mrs. Fain. Yonder Sir Wilfull's drunk; and so noisy that my mother has been forced to leave Sir Rowland to appease him; but he answers her only with singing and drinking. — What they may have done by this time I know not; but Petulant and he were upon quarrelling as I came by.

Milla. Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing; — for I find I love him violently.

Mrs. Fain. So it seems; when you mind not what's said to you. — If you doubt him, you had best take up with Sir Wilfull.

Milla. How can you name that superannuated lubber? foh!

(*Enter* Witwoud *from drinking.*)

Mrs. Fain. So, is the fray made up, that you have left 'em?

Wit. Left 'em? I could stay no longer — I have laughed like ten christ'nings — I am tipsy with laughing. — If I had stayed any longer I should have burst, — I must have been let out and pieced in the sides like an unfixed camlet. — Yes, yes, the fray is composed; my lady came in like a *noli prosequi* and stopped the proceedings.

Milla. What was the dispute?

Wit. That's the jest; there was no dispute. They could neither of 'em speak for rage; and so fell a sputt'ring at one another like two roasting apples.

(*Enter* Petulant *drunk.*)

Wit. Now, Petulant, all's over, all's well. Gad, my head begins to whim it about. — Why dost thou not speak? Thou art both as drunk and as mute as a fish.

Pet. Look you, Mrs. Millamant — if you can love me, dear nymph — say it — and that's the conclusion — pass on, or pass off, — that's all.

Wit. Thou hast uttered volumes, folios, in less than *decimo sexto*, my dear Lacedemonian. Sirrah Petulant, thou art an epitomizer of words.

Pet. Witwoud — you are an annihilator of sense.

Wit. Thou art a retailer of phrases; and dost deal in remnants of remnants, like a maker of pincushions — thou art in truth (metaphorically speaking) a speaker of shorthand.

Pet. Thou art (without a figure) just one half of an ass; and Baldwin yonder, thy half-brother, is the rest. — A gemini of asses split, would make just four of you.

Wit. Thou dost bite, my dear mustard seed; kiss me for that.

Pet. Stand off — I'll kiss no more males, — I have kissed your twin yonder in a humor of reconciliation, till he (*hiccup*) rises upon my stomach like a radish.

Milla. Eh! filthy creature! — what was the quarrel?

Pet. There was no quarrel — there might have been a quarrel.

Wit. If there had been words enow between 'em to have expressed provocation, they had gone together by the ears like a pair of castanets.

Pet. You were the quarrel.

Milla. Me!

Pet. If I have a humor to quarrel, I can make less matters conclude premises. — If you are not handsome, what then, if I have a humor to prove it? — If I shall have my reward, say so; if not, fight for your face the next time yourself. — I'll go sleep.

Wit. Do, wrap thyself up like a woodlouse, and dream revenge — and hear me, if thou canst learn to write by to-morrow morning, pen me a challenge — I'll carry it for thee.

Pet. Carry your mistress's monkey a spider, — go flea dogs, and read romances! — I'll go to bed to my maid. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. Fain. He's horridly drunk. — How came you all in this pickle?

Wit. A plot, a plot, to get rid of the knight, — your husband's advice; but he sneaked off.

(*Enter* Lady [Wishfort] *and* Sir Wilfull, *drunk.*)

Lady [Wish.]. Out upon't, out upon't, at years of discretion, and comport yourself at this rantipole rate!

Sir Wil. No offence, aunt.

Lady Wish. Offence? As I'm a person, I'm ashamed of you. — Fogh! how you stink of wine! D'ye think my niece will ever endure such a Borachio! you're an absolute Borachio.

Sir Wil. Borachio!

Lady Wish. At a time when you should commence an amour and put your best foot foremost ——

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, an you grutch me your liquor, make a bill. — Give me more drink, and take my purse. (*Sings.*)

Prithee fill me the glass
Till it laugh in my face,
With ale that is potent and mellow;
He that whines for a lass,
Is an ignorant ass,
For a bumper has not its fellow.

But if you would have me marry my cousin, — say the word, and I'll do't — Wilfull will do't, that's the word — Wilfull will do't, that's my crest — my motto I have forgot.

Lady Wish. My nephew's a little overtaken, cousin — but 'tis with drinking your health. — O my word you are obliged to him ——

Sir Wil. *In vino veritas*, aunt. — If I drunk your health to-day, cousin, I am a Borachio. But if you have a mind to be married, say the word, and send for the piper, Wilfull will do't. If not, dust it away, and let's have t'other round. — Tony, 'odsheart, where's Tony. — Tony's an honest fellow, but he spits after a bumper, and that's a fault. (*Sings.*)

We'll drink and we'll never ha' done, boys,
Put the glass then around with the sun, boys,
Let Apollo's example invite us;
For he's drunk every night,
And that makes him so bright,
That he's able next morning to light us.

The sun's a good pimple, an honest soaker; he has a cellar at your Antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at your Antipodes. — Your Antipodes are a good rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows. — If I had a bumper, I'd stand upon my head and drink a health to 'em. — A match or no match, cousin with the hard name? — Aunt, Wilfull will do't. If she has her maidenhead, let her look to't; if she has not, let her keep her own counsel in the meantime, and cry out at the nine months' end.

Milla. Your pardon, madam, I can stay no longer — Sir Wilfull grows very powerful. Egh! how he smells! I shall be overcome if I stay. Come, cousin.

(*Ex.* Milla. *and* Mrs. Fain.)

Lady Wish. Smells! he would poison a tallow-chandler and his family. Beastly creature, I know not what to do with him. — Travel, quoth a; ay travel, travel, get thee gone, get thee but far enough, to the Saracens, or the Tartars, or the Turks — for thou art not fit to live in a Christian commonwealth, thou beastly pagan.

Sir Wil. Turks, no; no Turks, aunt: your Turks are infidels, and believe not in the grape. Your Mahometan, your Mussulman, is a dry stinkard — no offence, aunt. My map says that your Turk is not so honest a man as your Christian. — I cannot find by the map that your Mufti is orthodox — whereby it is a plain case, that orthodox is a hard word, aunt, and (*hiccup*) Greek for claret. (*Sings.*)

To drink is a Christian diversion,
Unknown to the Turk or the Persian:
Let Mahometan fools
Live by heathenish rules,
And be damned over tea-cups and coffee.
But let British lads sing,
Crown a health to the king,
And a fig for your sultan and sophy.

Ah, Tony!

(*Enter* Foible *and whispers* Lady [Wishfort].)

Lady Wish. Sir Rowland impatient? Good lack! what shall I do with this beastly tumbril? — Go lie down and sleep, you sot — or as I'm a person, I'll have you bastinadoed with broom-sticks. Call up the wenches. (*Ex.* Foib.)

Sir Wil. Ahey! Wenches, where are the wenches?

Lady Wish. Dear Cousin Witwoud, get him away, and you will bind me to you inviolably. I have an affair of moment that invades me with some precipitation. — You will oblige me to all futurity.

Wit. Come, knight. — Pox on him, I

don't know what to say to him. — Will you go to a cock-match?

Sir Wil. With a wench, Tony? Is she a shake-bag, sirrah? Let me bite your cheek for that.

Wit. Horrible! He has a breath like a bagpipe. — Ay, ay; come, will you march, my Salopian?

Sir Wil. Lead on, little Tony — I'll follow thee, my Anthony, my Tantony. Sirrah, thou sha't be my Tantony; and I'll be thy pig.

— And a fig for your sultan and sophy.

(*Exit singing with* Witwoud.)

Lady Wish. This will never do. It will never make a match. — At least before he has been abroad.

(*Enter* Waitwell, *disguised as for* Sir Rowland.)

Dear Sir Rowland, I am confounded with confusion at the retrospection of my own rudeness, — I have more pardons to ask than the pope distributes in the year of jubilee. But I hope where there is likely to be so near an alliance, we may unbend the severity of decorum, and dispense with a little ceremony.

Wait. My impatience, madam, is the effect of my transport; — and till I have the possession of your adorable person, I am tantalized on a rack; and do but hang, madam, on the tenter of expectation.

Lady Wish. You have excess of gallantry, Sir Rowland; and press things to a conclusion, with a most prevailing vehemence. — But a day or two for decency of marriage ——

Wait. For decency of funeral, madam. The delay will break my heart — or if that should fail, I shall be poisoned. My nephew will get an inkling of my designs, and poison me, — and I would willingly starve him before I die — I would gladly go out of the world with that satisfaction. — That would be some comfort to me, if I could but live so long as to be revenged on that unnatural viper.

Lady Wish. Is he so unnatural, say you? Truly I would contribute much both to the saving of your life, and the accomplishment of your revenge. — Not that I respect myself, though he has been a perfidious wretch to me.

Wait. Perfidious to you!

Lady Wish. O Sir Rowland, the hours that he has died away at my feet, the tears that he has shed, the oaths that he has sworn, the palpitations that he has felt, the trances, and the tremblings, the ardors and the ecstasies, the kneelings and the risings, the heart-heavings, and the hand-gripings, the pangs and the pathetic regards of his protesting eyes! Oh, no memory can register!

Wait. What, my rival! is the rebel my rival? a' dies.

Lady Wish. No, don't kill him at once, Sir Rowland; starve him gradually inch by inch.

Wait. I'll do't. In three weeks he shall be bare-foot; in a month out at knees with begging an alms; — he shall starve upward and upward, till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a stink like a candle's end upon a save-all.

Lady Wish. Well, Sir Rowland, you have the way, — you are no novice in the labyrinth of love — you have the clue. — But as I am a person, Sir Rowland, you must not attribute my yielding to any sinister appetite, or indigestion of widowhood; nor impute my complacency to any lethargy of continence. — I hope you do not think me prone to any iteration of nuptials. ——

Wait. Far be it from me ——

Lady Wish. If you do, I protest I must recede — or think that I have made a prostitution of decorums, but in the vehemence of compassion, and to save the life of a person of so much importance ——

Wait. I esteem it so ——

Lady Wish. Or else you wrong my condescension ——

Wait. I do not, I do not ——

Lady Wish. Indeed you do.

Wait. I do not, fair shrine of virtue.

Lady Wish. If you think the least scruple of carnality was an ingredient ——

Wait. Dear madam, no. You are all camphor and frankincense, all chastity and odor.

Lady Wish. Or that ——

(*Enter* Foible.)

Foib. Madam, the dancers are ready, and there's one with a letter, who must deliver it into your own hands.

Lady Wish. Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? Think favorably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a person who would suffer racks in honor's cause, dear Sir Rowland, and will wait on you incessantly. (*Exit.*)

Wait. Fie, fie! — What a slavery have I undergone! Spouse, hast thou any cordial? — I want spirits.

Foib. What a washy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and swearing to a fine lady!

Wait. Oh, she is the antidote to desire. Spouse, thou wilt fare the worse for't — I shall have no appetite to iteration of nuptials — this eight and forty hours. — By this hand I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days — than act Sir Rowland 'till this time to-morrow.

(*Enter* Lady [Wishfort] *with a letter.*)

Lady Wish. Call in the dancers. — Sir Rowland, we'll sit, if you please, and see the entertainment. (*Dance.*) Now with your permission, Sir Rowland, I will peruse my letter — I would open it in your presence, because I would not make you uneasy. If it should make you uneasy I would burn it — speak if it does — but you may see by the superscription it is like a woman's hand.

Foib. [*aside to* Waitwell]. By heaven! Mrs. Marwood's, I know it; — my heart aches — get it from her ——

Wait. A woman's hand? No, madam, that's no woman's hand, I see that already. That's somebody whose throat must be cut.

Lady Wish. Nay, Sir Rowland, since you give me a proof of your passion by your jealousy, I promise you I'll make you a return, by a frank communication. — You shall see it — we'll open it together — look you here.

(*Reads.*) "Madam, though unknown to you," — Look you there, 'tis from nobody that I know — "I have that honor for your character, that I think myself obliged to let you know you are abused. He who pretends to be Sir Rowland is a cheat and a rascal ——" Oh heavens! what's this?

Foib [*aside*]. Unfortunate, all's ruined.

Wait. How, how, let me see, let me see! (*Reading,*) "A rascal, and disguised and suborned for that imposture," — O villainy! O villainy! — "by the contrivance of ——"

Lady Wish. I shall faint, I shall die, I shall die, oh!

Foib. [*aside to* Waitwell]. Say 'tis your nephew's hand. — Quickly, his plot, swear, swear it.

Wait. Here's a villain! Madam, don't you perceive it, don't you see it?

Lady Wish. Too well, too well. I have seen too much.

Wait. I told you at first I knew the hand. — A woman's hand? The rascal writes a sort of a large hand, your Roman hand. — I saw there was a throat to be cut presently. If he were my son, as he is my nephew, I'd pistol him ——

Foib. O treachery! But are you sure, Sir Rowland, it is his writing?

Wait. Sure? am I here? do I live? do I love this pearl of India? I have twenty letters in my pocket from him, in the same character.

Lady Wish. How!

Foib. Oh, what luck it is, Sir Rowland, that you were present at this juncture! This was the business that brought Mr. Mirabell disguised to Madam Millamant this afternoon. I thought something was contriving, when he stole by me and would have hid his face.

Lady Wish. How, how! — I heard the villain was in the house indeed, and now I remember, my niece went away abruptly, when Sir Wilfull was to have made his addresses.

Foib. Then, then, madam, Mr. Mirabell waited for her in her chamber, but I would not tell your ladyship to discompose you when you were to receive Sir Rowland.

Wait. Enough, his date is short.

FOIB. No, good Sir Rowland, don't incur the law.

WAIT. Law! I care not for law. I can but die, and 'tis in a good cause — my lady shall be satisfied of my truth and innocence, though it cost me my life.

LADY WISH. No, dear Sir Rowland, don't fight; if you should be killed I must never show my face; or hanged — Oh, consider my reputation, Sir Rowland! — No, you shan't fight. — I'll go in and examine my niece; I'll make her confess. I conjure you, Sir Rowland, by all your love, not to fight.

WAIT. I am charmed, madam, I obey. But some proof you must let me give you; — I'll go for a black box, which contains the writings of my whole estate, and deliver that into your hands.

LADY WISH. Ay, dear Sir Rowland, that will be some comfort; bring the black box.

WAIT. And may I presume to bring a contract to be signed this night? May I hope so far?

LADY WISH. Bring what you will; but come alive, pray come alive. Oh, this is a happy discovery!

WAIT. Dead or alive I'll come — and married we will be in spight of treachery; ay, and get an heir that shall defeat the last remaining glimpse of hope in my abandoned nephew. Come, my buxom widow:

E'er long you shall substantial proof receive
That I'm an arrant knight ——

FOIB. [*aside*]. Or arrant knave.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT V.

SCENE — *Scene continues*

(LADY WISHFORT *and* FOIBLE.)

LADY [WISH.]. Out of my house, out of my house, thou viper, thou serpent, that I have fostered! thou bosom traitress, that I raised from nothing! — begone, begone, begone, go, go! — that I took from washing of old gauze and weaving of dead hair, with a bleak blue nose, over a chafing-dish of starved embers, and dining behind a traverse rag, in a shop no bigger than a bird-cage, — go, go, starve again, do, do!

FOIB. Dear madam, I'll beg pardon on my knees.

LADY WISH. Away, out, out, go set up for yourself again! — do, drive a trade, do, with your threepenny worth of small ware, flaunting upon a packthread, under a brandy-feller's bulk, or against a dead wall by a ballad-monger! Go, hang out an old Frisoneer gorget, with a yard of yellow colberteen again! do! an old gnawed mask, two rows of pins, and a child's fiddle; a glass necklace with the beads broken, and a quilted nightcap with one ear! Go, go, drive a trade! — These were your commodities, you treacherous trull, this was the merchandise you dealt in, when I took you into my house, placed you next myself, and made you governante of my whole family! You have forgot this, have you, now you have feathered your nest?

FOIB. No, no, dear madam. Do but hear me, have but a moment's patience — I'll confess all. Mr. Mirabell seduced me; I am not the first that he has wheedled with his dissembling tongue; your ladyship's own wisdom has been deluded by him, — then how should I, a poor ignorant, defend myself? O madam, if you knew but what he promised me, and how he assured me your ladyship should come to no damage! — Or else the wealth of the Indies should not have bribed me to conspire against so good, so sweet, so kind a lady as you have been to me.

LADY WISH. No damage? What, to betray me, to marry me to a cast serving-man; to make me a receptacle, an hospital for a decayed pimp? No damage? O thou frontless impudence, more than a big-bellied actress!

FOIB. Pray, do but hear me, madam; he could not marry your ladyship, madam. — No indeed, his marriage was to have been void in law; for he was married to me first, to secure your ladyship. He could not have bedded your ladyship; for if he had consummated with your ladyship, he must have run the risk of the law, and been put upon his clergy. — Yes indeed, I inquired of the law in that case before I would meddle or make.

Lady Wish. What, then I have been your property, have I? I have been convenient to you, it seems, — while you were catering for Mirabell, I have been broker for you! What, have you made a passive bawd of me? — This exceeds all precedent; I am brought to fine uses, to become a botcher of second-hand marriages between Abigails and Andrews! I'll couple you! Yes, I'll baste you together, you and your Philander! I'll Duke's Place you, as I'm a person. Your turtle is in custody already; you shall coo in the same cage, if there be constable or warrant in the parish. (*Exit.*)

Foib. Oh, that ever I was born! Oh, that I was ever married! — A bride, ay, I shall be a Bridewell-bride. Oh!

(*Enter* Mrs. Fainall.)

Mrs. Fain. Poor Foible, what's the matter?

Foib. O madam, my lady's gone for a constable; I shall be had to a justice, and put to Bridewell to beat hemp! Poor Waitwell's gone to prison already.

Mrs. Fain. Have a good heart, Foible; Mirabell's gone to give security for him. This is all Marwood's and my husband's doing.

Foib. Yes, yes; I know it, madam; she was in my lady's closet, and overheard all that you said to me before dinner. She sent the letter to my lady; and that missing effect, Mr. Fainall laid this plot to arrest Waitwell, when he pretended to go for the papers; and in the meantime Mrs. Marwood declared all to my lady.

Mrs. Fain. Was there no mention made of me in the letter? — My mother does not suspect my being in the confederacy? I fancy Marwood has not told her, though she has told my husband.

Foib. Yes, madam; but my lady did not see that part; we stifled the letter before she read so far. Has that mischievous devil told Mr. Fainall of your ladyship then?

Mrs. Fain. Ay, all's out, my affair with Mirabell, everything discovered. This is the last day of our living together, that's my comfort.

Foib. Indeed, madam, and so 'tis a comfort if you knew all; — he has been even with your ladyship, which I could have told you long enough since, but I love to keep peace and quietness by my good will. I had rather bring friends together than set 'em at distance. But Mrs. Marwood and he are nearer related than ever their parents thought for.

Mrs. Fain. Say'st thou so, Foible? Canst thou prove this?

Foib. I can take my oath of it, madam, so can Mrs. Mincing; we have had many a fair word from Madam Marwood, to conceal something that passed in our chamber one evening when you were at Hyde Park; — and we were thought to have gone a-walking, but we went up unawares, — though we were sworn to secrecy too. Madam Marwood took a book and swore us upon it; but it was but a book of poems. — So long as it was not a Bible oath, we may break it with a safe conscience.

Mrs. Fain. This discovery is the most opportune thing I could wish. Now Mincing?

(*Enter* Mincing.)

Minc. My lady would speak with Mrs. Foible, mem. Mr. Mirabell is with her; he has set your spouse at liberty, Mrs. Foible, and would have you hide yourself in my lady's closet, till my old lady's anger is abated. Oh, my old lady is in a perilous passion at something Mr. Fainall has said; he swears, and my old lady cries. There's a fearful hurricane, I vow. He says, mem, how that he'll have my lady's fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorced.

Mrs. Fain. Does your lady and Mirabell know that?

Minc. Yes, mem, they have sent me to see if Sir Wilfull be sober, and to bring him to them. My lady is resolved to have him I think, rather than lose such a vast sum as six thousand pound. Oh, come Mrs. Foible, I hear my old lady.

Mrs. Fain. Foible, you must tell Mincing that she must prepare to vouch when I call her.

Foib. Yes, yes, madam.

Minc. Oh, yes, mem, I'll vouch anything for your ladyship's service, be what it will. (*Exeunt* Minc. *and* Foib.)

(*Enter* Lady [Wishfort] *and* [Mrs.] Marwood.)

Lady [Wish.]. Oh, my dear friend, how can I enumerate the benefits that I have received from your goodness? To you I owe the timely discovery of the false vows of Mirabell; to you I owe the detection of the impostor Sir Rowland. And now you are become an intercessor with my son-in-law, to save the honor of my house, and compound for the frailties of my daughter. Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad world, or else I would retire to deserts and solitudes; and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves and be shepherdesses.

Mrs. Mar. Let us first dispatch the affair in hand, madam. We shall have leisure to think of retirement afterwards. — Here is one who is concerned in the treaty.

Lady Wish. Oh daughter, daughter, is it possible thou should'st be my child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and as I may say, another me, and yet transgress the most minute particle of severe virtue? Is it possible you should lean aside to iniquity, who have been cast in the direct mold of virtue? I have not only been a mold but a pattern for you, and a model for you, after you were brought into the world.

Mrs. Fain. I don't understand your ladyship.

Lady Wish. Not understand? Why, have you not been naught? Have you not been sophisticated? Not understand? Here I am ruined to compound for your caprices and your cuckoldoms. I must pawn my plate and my jewels, and ruin my niece, and all little enough ——

Mrs. Fain. I am wronged and abused, and so are you. 'Tis a false accusation, as false as hell, as false as your friend there, ay, or your friend's friend, my false husband.

Mrs. Mar. My friend, Mrs. Fainall? Your husband my friend! what do you mean?

Mrs. Fain. I know what I mean, madam, and so do you; and so shall the world at a time convenient.

Mrs. Mar. I am sorry to see you so passionate, madam. More temper would look more like innocence. But I have done. I am sorry my zeal to serve your ladyship and family should admit of misconstruction, or make me liable to affronts. You will pardon me, madam, if I meddle no more with an affair in which I am not personally concerned.

Lady Wish. O dear friend, I am so ashamed that you should meet with such returns! — [*To* Mrs. Fainall.] You ought to ask pardon on your knees, ungrateful creature! she deserves more from you, than all your life can accomplish. — *To* Mrs. Marwood.] Oh, don't leave me destitute in this perplexity! — no, stick to me, my good genius.

Mrs. Fain. I tell you, madam, you're abused. — Stick to you? ay, like a leech, to suck your best blood — she'll drop off when she's full. Madam, you sha' not pawn a bodkin, nor part with a brass counter in composition for me. I defy 'em all. Let 'em prove their aspersions: I know my own innocence, and dare stand by a trial. (*Exit.*)

Lady Wish. Why, if she should be innocent, if she should be wronged after all, ha? I don't know what to think, — and I promise you, her education has been unexceptionable — I may say it; for I chiefly made it my own care to initiate her very infancy in the rudiments of virtue, and to impress upon her tender years a young odium and aversion to the very sight of men, — ay, friend, she would ha' shrieked if she had but seen a man, till she was in her teens. As I'm a person, 'tis true. — She was never suffered to play with a male-child, though but in coats; nay, her very babies were of the feminine gender. — Oh, she never looked a man in the face but her own father, or the chaplain, and him we made a shift to put upon her for a woman, by the help of his long garments, and his sleek face, till she was going in her fifteen.

Mrs. Mar. 'Twas much she should be deceived so long.

Lady Wish. I warrant you, or she would never have borne to have been catechised by him; and have heard his long lectures against singing and dancing, and such debaucheries; and going to filthy plays, and profane music-meetings, where the lewd trebles squeek nothing but bawdy, and the bases roar blasphemy. Oh, she would have swooned at the sight or name of an obscene play-book — and can I think, after all this, that my daughter can be naught? What, a whore? And thought it excommunication to set her foot within the door of a play-house. O my dear friend, I can't believe it, no, no! As she says, let him prove it, let him prove it!

Mrs. Mar. Prove it, madam? What, and have your name prostituted in a public court! yours and your daughter's reputation worried at the bar by a pack of bawling lawyers? To be ushered in with an "O yez" of scandal; and have your case opened by an old fumbling lecher in a quoif like a man midwife, to bring your daughter's infamy to light; to be a theme for legal punsters, and quibblers by the statute; and become a jest, against a rule of court, where there is no precedent for a jest in any record, not even in Doomsday Book; to discompose the gravity of the bench, and provoke naughty interrogatories in more naughty law Latin; while the good judge, tickled with the proceeding, simpers under a grey beard, and fidgets off and on his cushion as if he had swallowed cantharides, or sat upon cow-itch!

Lady Wish. Oh, 'tis very hard!

Mrs. Mar. And then to have my young revellers of the Temple take notes, like 'prentices at a conventicle; and after, talk it over again in Commons, or before drawers in an eating-house.

Lady Wish. Worse and worse!

Mrs. Mar. Nay, this is nothing; if it would end here, 'twere well. But it must after this be consigned by the shorthand writers to the public press; and from thence be transferred to the hands, nay, into the throats and lungs of hawkers, with voices more licentious than the loud flounder-man's, or the woman that cries grey-pease; and this you must hear till you are stunned; nay, you must hear nothing else for some days.

Lady Wish. Oh, 'tis insupportable. No, no, dear friend, make it up, make it up; ay, ay, I'll compound. I'll give up all, myself and my all, my niece and her all, — anything, everything for composition.

Mrs. Mar. Nay, madam, I advise nothing; I only lay before you, as a friend, the inconveniencies which perhaps you have overseen. Here comes Mr. Fainall. If he will be satisfied to huddle up all in silence, I shall be glad. You must think I would rather congratulate than condole with you.

(*Enter* Fainall.)

Lady Wish. Ay, ay, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood; no, no, I do not doubt it.

Fain. Well, madam; I have suffered myself to be overcome by the importunity of this lady your friend; and am content you shall enjoy your own proper estate during life, on condition you oblige yourself never to marry, under such penalty as I think convenient.

Lady Wish. Never to marry?

Fain. No more Sir Rowlands, — the next imposture may not be so timely detected.

Mrs. Mar. That condition, I dare answer, my lady will consent to, without difficulty; she has already but too much experienced the perfidiousness of men. Besides, madam, when we retire to our pastoral solitude we shall bid adieu to all other thoughts.

Lady Wish. Ay, that's true; but in case of necessity, as of health, or some such emergency ——

Fain. Oh, if you are prescribed marriage, you shall be considered; I will only reserve to myself the power to choose for you. If your physic be wholesome, it matters not who is your apothecary. Next, my wife shall settle on me the remainder of her fortune, not made over already, and for her maintenance depend entirely on my discretion.

Lady Wish. This is most inhumanly savage; exceeding the barbarity of a Muscovite husband.

Fain. I learned it from his Czarish majesty's retinue, in a winter evening's conference over brandy and pepper, amongst other secrets of matrimony and policy, as they are at present practised in the northern hemisphere. But this must be agreed unto, and that positively. Lastly, I will be endowed, in right of my wife, with that six thousand pounds, which is the moiety of Mrs. Millamant's fortune in your possession; and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last will and testament of your deceased husband, Sir Jonathan Wishfort) by her disobedience in contracting herself against your consent or knowledge; and by refusing the offered match with Sir Wilfull Witwoud, which you, like a careful aunt, had provided for her.

Lady Wish. My nephew was *non compos*, and could not make his addresses.

Fain. I come to make demands, — I'll hear no objections.

Lady Wish. You will grant me time to consider?

Fain. Yes, while the instrument is drawing, to which you must set your hand till more sufficient deeds can be perfected: which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the meanwhile, I will go for the said instrument, and till my return you may balance this matter in your own discretion. (*Exit* Fain.)

Lady Wish. This insolence is beyond all precedent, all parallel; must I be subject to this merciless villain?

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis severe indeed, madam, that you should smart for your daughter's wantonness.

Lady Wish. 'Twas against my consent that she married this barbarian, but she would have him, though her year was not out. — Ah! her first husband, my son Languish, would not have carried it thus. Well, that was my choice, this is hers; she is matched now with a witness. — I shall be mad, dear friend, — is there no comfort for me? Must I live to be confiscated at this rebel-rate? — Here comes two more of my Egyptian plagues too.

(*Enter* Millamant *and* Sir Wilfull.)

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.

Lady Wish. Out, caterpillar, call not me aunt! I know thee not!

Sir Wil. I confess I have been a little in disguise, as they say, — 'sheart! and I'm sorry for't. What would you have? I hope I committed no offence, aunt — and if I did I am willing to make satisfaction; and what can a man say fairer? If I have broke anything, I'll pay for't, an it cost a pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more words. For what's to come, to pleasure you I'm willing to marry my cousin. So pray let's all be friends; she and I are agreed upon the matter before a witness.

Lady Wish. How's this, dear niece? Have I any comfort? Can this be true?

Milla. I am content to be a sacrifice to your repose, madam; and to convince you that I had no hand in the plot, as you were misinformed, I have laid my commands on Mirabell to come in person, and be a witness that I give my hand to this flower of knighthood; and for the contract that passed between Mirabell and me, I have obliged him to make a resignation of it in your ladyship's presence; — he is without, and waits your leave for admittance.

Lady Wish. Well, I'll swear I am something revived at this testimony of your obedience; but I cannot admit that traitor, — I fear I cannot fortify myself to support his appearance. He is as terrible to me as a Gorgon; if I see him, I fear I shall turn to stone, petrify incessantly.

Milla. If you disoblige him, he may resent your refusal, and insist upon the contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

Lady Wish. Are you sure it will be the last time? — If I were sure of that — shall I never see him again?

Milla. Sir Wilfull, you and he are to travel together, are you not?

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, the gentleman's a civil gentleman, aunt, let him come in; why, we are sworn brothers and fellow-travellers. — We are to be Pylades and Orestes, he and I. — He is to be my interpreter in foreign parts. He has been over-seas once already; and with proviso that I marry my cousin, will cross 'em once again, only to bear me company. — 'Sheart, I'll call him in, — an I set on't once, he shall come in; and see who'll hinder him. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. Mar. [*aside*]. This is precious fooling, if it would pass; but I'll know the bottom of it.

Lady Wish. O dear Marwood, you are not going?

Mar. Not far, madam; I'll return immediately. (*Exit.*)

(*Re-enter* Sir Wilfull *and* Mirabell.)

Sir Wil. Look up, man, I'll stand by you; 'sbud, an she do frown, she can't kill you; — besides — hark'ee, she dare not frown desperately, because her face is none of her own; 'sheart, an she should, her forehead would wrinkle like the coat of a cream-cheese; but mum for that, fellow-traveller.

Mira. If a deep sense of the many injuries I have offered to so good a lady, with a sincere remorse, and a hearty contrition, can but obtain the least glance of compassion, I am too happy. — Ah, madam, there was a time — but let it be forgotten — I confess I have deservedly forfeited the high place I once held, of sighing at your feet; nay, kill me not, by turning from me in disdain — I come not to plead for favor, — nay, not for pardon; I am a suppliant only for pity — I am going where I never shall behold you more ——

Sir Wil. How, fellow-traveller! — You shall go by yourself then.

Mira. Let me be pitied first; and afterwards forgotten — I ask no more.

Sir Wil. By'r Lady, a very reasonable request, and will cost you nothing, aunt. — Come, come, forgive and forget, aunt; why you must, an you are a Christian.

Mira. Consider, madam, in reality you could not receive much prejudice; it was an innocent device; though I confess it had a face of guiltiness, it was at most an artifice which love contrived — and errors which love produces have ever been accounted venial. At least think it is punishment enough, that I have lost what in my heart I hold most dear, that to your cruel indignation I have offered up this beauty, and with her my peace and quiet; nay, all my hopes of future comfort.

Sir Wil. An he does not move me, would I may never be o' the quorum! — an it were not as good a deed as to drink, to give her to him again, I would I might never take shipping! — Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I shall melt, I can tell you that. My contract went no further than a little mouth glue, and that's hardly dry; — one doleful sigh more from my fellow-traveller and 'tis dissolved.

Lady Wish. Well, nephew, upon your account. — Ah, he has a false insinuating tongue! — Well, sir, I will stifle my just resentment at my nephew's request. — I will endeavor what I can to forget, — but on proviso that you resign the contract with my niece immediately.

Mira. It is in writing and with papers of concern; but I have sent my servant for it, and will deliver it to you, with all acknowledgments for your transcendent goodness.

Lady Wish. [*aside*]. Oh, he has witchcraft in his eyes and tongue! — When I did not see him, I could have bribed a villain to his assassination; but his appearance rakes the embers which have so long lain smothered in my breast. ——

(*Enter* Fainall *and* Mrs. Marwood.)

Fain. Your date of deliberation, madam, is expired. Here is the instrument; are you prepared to sign?

Lady Wish. If I were prepared, I am not impowered. My niece exerts a lawful claim, having matched herself by my direction to Sir Wilfull.

Fain. That sham is too gross to pass on me, — though 'tis imposed on you, madam.

Milla. Sir, I have given my consent.

Mira. And, sir, I have resigned my pretensions.

Sir Wil. And, sir, I assert my right; and will maintain it in defiance of you, sir, and of your instrument. 'Sheart, an you talk of an instrument, sir, I have an old fox by my thigh shall hack your instrument of ram vellum to shreds, sir! It shall not be sufficient for a mittimus or a tailor's measure; therefore, withdraw your instrument, sir, or by'r Lady I shall draw mine.

Lady Wish. Hold, nephew, hold!

Milla. Good Sir Wilfull, respite your valor!

Fain. Indeed? Are you provided of your guard, with your single beef-eater there? But I'm prepared for you; and insist upon my first proposal. You shall submit your own estate to my management, and absolutely make over my wife's to my sole use, as pursuant to the purport and tenor of this other covenant. — I suppose, madam, your consent is not requisite in this case; nor, Mr. Mirabell, your resignation; nor, Sir Wilfull, your right. — You may draw your fox if you please, sir, and make a bear-garden flourish somewhere else; for here it will not avail. This, my Lady Wishfort, must be subscribed, or your darling daughter's turned adrift, like a leaky hulk to sink or swim, as she and the current of this lewd town can agree.

Lady Wish. Is there no means, no remedy, to stop my ruin? Ungrateful wretch! dost thou not owe thy being, thy subsistence, to my daughter's fortune?

Fain. I'll answer you when I have the rest of it in my possession.

Mira. But that you would not accept of a remedy from my hands — I own I have not deserved you should owe any obligation to me; or else perhaps I could advise ——

Lady Wish. O what? what? to save me and my child from ruin, from want, I'll forgive all that's past; nay, I'll consent to anything to come, to be delivered from this tyranny.

Mira. Ay, madam; but that is too late, my reward is intercepted. You have disposed of her, who only could have made me a compensation for all my services; — but be it as it may, I am resolved I'll serve you, — you shall not be wronged in this savage manner!

Lady Wish. How! Dear Mr. Mirabell, can you be so generous at last! But it is not possible. Hark'ee, I'll break my nephew's match, you shall have my niece yet, and all her fortune, if you can but save me from this imminent danger.

Mira. Will you? I take you at your word. I ask no more. I must have leave for two criminals to appear.

Lady Wish. Ay, ay, anybody, anybody!

Mira. Foible is one, and a penitent.

(*Enter* Mrs. Fainall, Foible, *and* Mincing.)

Mrs. Mar. (*to* Fain.). O my shame! these corrupt things are brought hither to expose me.

(Mira. *and* Lady [Wishfort] *go to* Mrs. Fain. *and* Foible.)

Fain. If it must all come out, why let 'em know it; 'tis but the way of the world. That shall not urge me to relinquish or abate one tittle of my terms; no, I will insist the more.

Foib. Yes, indeed, madam, I'll take my Bible oath of it.

Minc. And so will I, mem.

Lady Wish. O Marwood, Marwood, art thou false? my friend deceive me? Hast thou been a wicked accomplice with that profligate man?

Mrs. Mar. Have you so much ingratitude and injustice, to give credit against your friend, to the aspersions of two such mercenary trulls?

Minc. Mercenary, mem? I scorn your words. 'Tis true we found you and Mr. Fainall in the blue garret; by the same token, you swore us to secrecy upon Messalinas's poems. Mercenary? No, if we would have been mercenary, we should have held our tongues; you would have bribed us sufficiently.

FAIN. Go, you are an insignificant thing! — Well, what are you the better for this! Is this Mr. Mirabell's expedient? I'll be put off no longer. — You, thing, that was a wife, shall smart for this! I will not leave thee wherewithal to hide thy shame; your body shall be naked as your reputation.

MRS. FAIN. I despise you, and defy your malice! — You have aspersed me wrongfully — I have proved your falsehood. — Go you and your treacherous — I will not name it, — but starve together — perish!

FAIN. Not while you are worth a groat, indeed, my dear. Madam, I'll be fooled no longer.

LADY WISH. Ah, Mr. Mirabell, this is small comfort, the detection of this affair.

MIRA. Oh, in good time. — Your leave for the other offender and penitent to appear, madam.

(*Enter* WAITWELL *with a box of writings.*)

LADY WISH. O Sir Rowland! — Well, rascal!

WAIT. What your ladyship pleases. — I have brought the black box at last, madam.

MIRA. Give it me. Madam, you remember your promise.

LADY WISH. Ay, dear sir.

MIRA. Where are the gentlemen?

WAIT. At hand, sir, rubbing their eyes, — just risen from sleep.

FAIN. 'Sdeath, what's this to me? I'll not wait your private concerns.

(*Enter* PETULANT *and* WITWOUD.)

PET. How now? what's the matter? whose hand's out?

WIT. Hey day! what, are you all got together, like players at the end of the last act?

MIRA. You may remember, gentlemen, I once requested your hands as witnesses to a certain parchment.

WIT. Ay, I do, my hand I remember — Petulant set his mark.

MIRA. You wrong him, his name is fairly written, as shall appear. — You do not remember, gentlemen, anything of what that parchment contained? (*Undoing the box.*)

WIT. No.

PET. Not I. I writ, I read nothing.

MIRA. Very well, now you shall know. — Madam, your promise.

LADY WISH. Ay, ay, sir, upon my honor.

MIRA. Mr. Fainall, it is now time that you should know that your lady, while she was at her own disposal, and before you had by your insinuations wheedled her out of a pretended settlement of the greatest part of her fortune ——

FAIN. Sir! pretended!

MIRA. Yes, sir. I say that this lady while a widow, having, it seems, received some cautions respecting your inconstancy and tyranny of temper, which from her own partial opinion and fondness of you she could never have suspected — she did, I say, by the wholesome advice of friends and of sages learned in the laws of this land, deliver this same as her act and deed to me in trust, and to the uses within mentioned. You may read if you please (*holding out the parchment*) — though perhaps what is written on the back may serve your occasions.

FAIN. Very likely, sir. What's here? Damnation! (*Reads.*) "A deed of conveyance of the whole estate real of Arabella Languish, widow, in trust to Edward Mirabell." — Confusion!

MIRA. Even so, sir; 'tis the way of the world, sir, — of the widows of the world. I suppose this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtained from your lady.

FAIN. Perfidious fiend! then thus I'll be revenged. ——

(*Offers to run at* MRS. FAIN.)

SIR WIL. Hold, sir! now you may make your bear-garden flourish somewhere else, sir.

FAIN. Mirabell, you shall hear of this, sir, be sure you shall. — Let me pass, oaf. (*Exit.*)

MRS. FAIN. Madam, you seem to stifle your resentment. You had better give it vent.

Mrs. Mar. Yes, it shall have vent — and to your confusion, or I'll perish in the attempt. (*Exit.*)

Lady Wish. O daughter, daughter! 'tis plain thou hast inherited thy mother's prudence.

Mrs. Fain. Thank Mr. Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whose advice all is owing.

Lady Wish. Well, Mr. Mirabell, you have kept your promise — and I must perform mine. — First, I pardon for your sake Sir Rowland there and Foible; — the next thing is to break the matter to my nephew — and how to do that ——

Mira. For that, madam, give yourself no trouble; — let me have your consent. — Sir Wilfull is my friend; he has had compassion upon lovers, and generously engaged a volunteer in this action, for our service, and now designs to prosecute his travels.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, aunt, I have no mind to marry. My cousin's a fine lady, and the gentleman loves her and she loves him, and they deserve one another; my resolution is to see foreign parts — I have set on't — and when I'm set on't, I must do't. And if these two gentlemen would travel too, I think they may be spared.

Pet. For my part, I say little — I think things are best off or on.

Wit. I' gad, I understand nothing of the matter, — I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing-school.

Lady Wish. Well, sir, take her, and with her all the joy I can give you.

Milla. Why does not the man take me? Would you have me give myself to you over again?

Mira. Ay, and over and over again; for I would have you as often as possibly I can. (*Kisses her hand.*) Well, Heaven grant I love you not too well, that's all my fear.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, you'll have time enough to toy after you're married; or if you will toy now, let us have a dance in the meantime, that we who are not lovers may have some other employment besides looking on.

Mira. With all my heart, dear Sir Wilfull. What shall we do for music?

Foib. O sir, some that were provided for Sir Rowland's entertainment are yet within call. (*A dance.*)

Lady Wish. As I am a person, I can hold out no longer; — I have wasted my spirits so to-day already, that I am ready to sink under the fatigue; and I cannot but have some fears upon me yet, that my son Fainall will pursue some desperate course.

Mira. Madam, disquiet not yourself on that account; to my knowledge his circumstances are such, he must of force comply. For my part, I will contribute all that in me lies to a reunion; in the meantime, madam (*to* Mrs. Fain.), let me before these witnesses restore to you this deed of trust. It may be a means, well managed, to make you live easily together.

From hence let those be warned, who mean to wed;
Lest mutual falshood stain the bridal-bed:
For each deceiver to his cost may find,
That marriage frauds too oft are paid in kind. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE

After our epilogue this crowd dismisses,
I'm thinking how this play'll be pulled to pieces.
But pray consider, ere you doom its fall,
How hard a thing 'twould be, to please you all.
There are some critics so with spleen diseased,
They scarcely come inclining to be pleased:
And sure he must have more than mortal skill,
Who pleases any one against his will.
Then, all bad poets we are sure are foes,
And how their number's swelled the town well knows:
In shoals, I've marked 'em judging in the pit;
Though they're on no pretence for judgment fit,
But that they have been damned for want of wit.
Since when, they by their own offences taught,
Set up for spies on plays and finding fault.
Others there are whose malice we'd prevent;
Such who watch plays with scurrilous intent
To mark out who by characters are meant.
And though no perfect likeness they can trace;
Yet each pretends to know the copied face.
These with false glosses feed their own ill-nature,
And turn to libel what was meant a satire.
May such malicious fops this fortune find,
To think themselves alone the fools designed:
If any are so arrogantly vain,
To think they singly can support a scene,
And furnish fool enough to entertain.
For well the learned and the judicious know,
That satire scorns to stoop so meanly low,
As any one abstracted fop to show.
For, as when painters form a matchless face,
They from each fair one catch some different grace,
And shining features in one portrait blend,
To which no single beauty must pretend;
So poets oft do in one piece expose
Whole *belles assemblées* of coquettes and beaux.

THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM

A COMEDY

By GEORGE FARQUHAR

(1707)

ADVERTISEMENT

THE reader may find some faults in this play, which my illness prevented the amending of; but there is great amends made in the representation, which cannot be matched, no more than the friendly and indefatigable care of Mr. Wilks, to whom I chiefly owe the success of the play.

GEORGE FARQUHAR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

AIMWELL } two gentlemen of broken fortunes, the first as master, and
ARCHER } the second as servant.
Count BELLAIR, a French officer, prisoner at Lichfield.
SULLEN, a country blockhead, brutal to his wife.
FREEMAN, a gentleman from London.
FOIGARD, a priest, chaplain to the French officers.
GIBBET, a highwayman.
HOUNSLOW, } his companions.
BAGSHOT }
BONIFACE, landlord of the inn.
SCRUB, servant to Mr. Sullen.

WOMEN

Lady BOUNTIFUL, an old, civil, country gentlewoman, that cures all neighbors of all distempers, and foolishly fond of her son Sullen.
DORINDA, Lady Bountiful's daughter.
Mrs. SULLEN, her daughter-in-law.
GIPSY, maid to the ladies.
CHERRY, the landlord's daughter in the inn.

SCENE — Lichfield.

THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. WILKS

WHEN strife disturbs, or sloth corrupts an age,
Keen satire is the business of the stage.
When the *Plain Dealer* writ, he lash'd those crimes
Which then infested most — the modish times:
But now, when faction sleeps and sloth is fled,
And all our youth in active fields are bred;
When through Great Britain's fair extensive round,
The trumps of fame the notes of UNION sound;
When Anna's sceptre points the laws their course,
And her example gives her precepts force:
There scarce is room for satire; all our lays
Must be, or songs of triumph, or of praise.
But as in grounds best cultivated, tares
And poppies rise among the golden ears;
Our product so, fit for the field or school,
Must mix with nature's favorite plant — a fool:
A weed that has to twenty summers ran,
Shoots up in stalk, and vegetates to man.
Simpling our author goes from field to field,
And culls such fools as may diversion yield;
And, thanks to Nature, there's no want of those,
For, rain or shine, the thriving coxcomb grows.
Follies to-night we show ne'er lash'd before,
Yet such as nature shows you every hour;
Nor can the pictures give a just offence,
For fools are made for jests to men of sense.

ACT I.

SCENE I — *An Inn*

(*Enter* BONIFACE, *running.*)

BON. Chamberlain! maid! Cherry! daughter Cherry! all asleep? all dead?

(*Enter* CHERRY, *running.*)

CHER. Here, here! why d'ye bawl so, father? d'ye think we have no ears?

BON. You deserve to have none, you young minx! The company of the Warrington coach has stood in the hall this hour, and nobody to show them to their chambers.

CHER. And let 'em wait farther; there's neither red-coat in the coach, nor footman behind it.

BON. But they threaten to go to another inn to-night.

CHER. That they dare not, for fear the coachman should overturn them to-morrow. — Coming! coming! — Here's the London coach arrived.

(*Enter several people with trunks, bandboxes, and other luggage, and cross the stage.*)

BON. Welcome, ladies!

CHER. Very welcome, gentlemen! — Chamberlain, show the *Lion* and the *Rose.*

(*Exit with the company.*)

(*Enter* Aimwell *in riding-habit*, Archer *as footman carrying a portmantle.*)

Bon. This way, this way, gentlemen!

Aim. [*to* Archer]. Set down the things; go to the stable, and see my horses well rubbed. (*Exit.*)

Arch. I shall, sir.

Aim. You're my landlord, I suppose?

Bon. Yes, sir, I'm old Will Boniface, pretty well known upon this road, as the saying is.

Aim. O Mr. Boniface, your servant!

Bon. O sir! — What will your honor please to drink, as the saying is?

Aim. I have heard your town of Lichfield much famed for ale; I think I'll taste that.

Bon. Sir, I have now in my cellar ten tun of the best ale in Staffordshire; 'tis smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as brandy; and will be just fourteen year old the fifth day of next March, old style.

Aim. You're very exact, I find, in the age of your ale.

Bon. As punctual, sir, as I am in the age of my children. I'll show you such ale! — Here, tapster, broach number 1706, as the saying is. — Sir, you shall taste my *Anno Domini*. — I have lived in Lichfield, man and boy, above eight-and-fifty years, and, I believe, have not consumed eight-and-fifty ounces of meat.

Aim. At a meal, you mean, if one may guess your sense by your bulk.

Bon. Not in my life, sir. I have fed purely upon ale; I have eat my ale, drank my ale, and I always sleep upon ale.

(*Enter Tapster with a bottle and glass.*)

Now, sir, you shall see! — (*Filling it out.*) Your worship's health. — Ha! delicious, delicious! — fancy it burgundy, only fancy it, and 'tis worth ten shillings a quart.

Aim. (*drinks*). 'Tis confounded strong!

Bon. Strong! It must be so, or how should we be strong that drink it?

Aim. And have you lived so long upon this ale, landlord?

Bon. Eight-and-fifty years, upon my credit, sir; but it killed my wife, poor woman, as the saying is.

Aim. How came that to pass?

Bon. I don't know how, sir; she would not let the ale take its natural course, sir; she was for qualifying it every now and then with a dram, as the saying is; and an honest gentleman that came this way from Ireland made her a present of a dozen bottles of usquebaugh — but the poor woman was never well after. But, howe'er, I was obliged to the gentleman, you know.

Aim. Why, was it the usquebaugh that killed her?

Bon. My Lady Bountiful said so. She, good lady, did what could be done; she cured her of three tympanies, but the fourth carried her off. But she's happy, and I'm contented, as the saying is.

Aim. Who's that Lady Bountiful you mentioned?

Bon. Ods my life, sir, we'll drink her health. — (*Drinks.*) My Lady Bountiful is one of the best of women. Her last husband, Sir Charles Bountiful, left her worth a thousand pound a year; and, I believe, she lays out one-half on't in charitable uses for the good of her neighbors. She cures rheumatisms, ruptures, and broken shins in men; green-sickness, obstructions, and fits of the mother in women; the king's evil, chincough, and chilblains in children: in short, she has cured more people in and about Lichfield within ten years than the doctors have killed in twenty; and that's a bold word.

Aim. Has the lady been any other way useful in her generation?

Bon. Yes, sir; she has a daughter by Sir Charles, the finest woman in all our country, and the greatest fortune. She has a son too, by her first husband, Squire Sullen, who married a fine lady from London t'other day; if you please, sir, we'll drink his health.

Aim. What sort of a man is he?

Bon. Why, sir, the man's well enough; says little, thinks less, and does — nothing at all, faith. But he's a man of a great estate, and values nobody.

Aim. A sportsman, I suppose?

Bon. Yes, sir, he's a man of pleasure; he plays at whisk and smokes his pipe eight-and-forty hours together sometimes.

Aim. And married, you say?

Bon. Ay, and to a curious woman, sir. — But he's a — he wants it here, sir. (*Pointing to his forehead.*)

Aim. He has it there, you mean.

Bon. That's none of my business; he's my landlord, and so a man, you know, would not — But — ecod, he's no better than — Sir, my humble service to you. — (*Drinks.*) Though I value not a farthing what he can do to me; I pay him his rent at quarter-day; I have a good running-trade; I have but one daughter, and I can give her — but no matter for that.

Aim. You're very happy, Mr. Boniface. Pray, what other company have you in town?

Bon. A power of fine ladies; and then we have the French officers.

Aim. Oh, that's right, you have a good many of those gentlemen. Pray, how do you like their company?

Bon. So well, as the saying is, that I could wish we had as many more of 'em; they're full of money, and pay double for everything they have. They know, sir, that we paid good round taxes for the taking of 'em, and so they are willing to reimburse us a little. One of 'em lodges in my house.

([*Re-*]*enter* Archer.)

Arch. Landlord, there are some French gentlemen below that ask for you.

Bon. I'll wait on 'em. — [*To* Archer.] Does your master stay long in town, as the saying is?

Arch. I can't tell, as the saying is.

Bon. Come from London?

Arch. No.

Bon. Going to London, mayhap?

Arch. No.

Bon. [*aside*]. An odd fellow this. — [*To* Aimwell.] I beg your worship's pardon, I'll wait on you in half a minute. (*Exit.*)

Aim. The coast's clear, I see. — Now, my dear Archer, welcome to Lichfield!

Arch. I thank thee, my dear brother in iniquity.

Aim. Iniquity! prithee, leave canting; you need not change your style with your dress.

Arch. Don't mistake me, Aimwell, for 'tis still my maxim, that there is no scandal like rags, nor any crime so shameful as poverty.

Aim. The world confesses it every day in its practice, though men won't own it for their opinion. Who did that worthy lord, my brother, single out of the side-box to sup with him t'other night?

Arch. Jack Handicraft, a handsome, well-dressed, mannerly, sharping rogue, who keeps the best company in town.

Aim. Right! And, pray, who married my lady Manslaughter t'other day, the great fortune?

Arch. Why, Nick Marrabone, a professed pickpocket, and a good bowler; but he makes a handsome figure, and rides in his coach, that he formerly used to ride behind.

Aim. But did you observe poor Jack Generous in the Park last week?

Arch. Yes, with his autumnal periwig, shading his melancholy face, his coat older than anything but its fashion, with one hand idle in his pocket, and with the other picking his useless teeth; and though the Mall was crowded with company, yet was poor Jack as single and solitary as a lion in a desert.

Aim. And as much avoided, for no crime upon earth but the want of money.

Arch. And that's enough. Men must not be poor; idleness is the root of all evil; the world's wide enough, let 'em bustle. Fortune has taken the weak under her protection, but men of sense are left to their industry.

Aim. Upon which topic we proceed, and, I think, luckily hitherto. Would not any man swear now that I am a man of quality, and you my servant, when if our intrinsic value were known ——

Arch. Come, come, we are the men of intrinsic value who can strike our fortunes out of ourselves, whose worth is independent of accidents in life, or revolutions in government; we have heads to get money, and hearts to spend it.

Aim. As to our hearts, I grant ye, they are as willing tits as any within twenty degrees; but I can have no great opinion of our heads from the service they have done us hitherto, unless it be that they have brought us from London hither to Lichfield, made me a lord, and you my servant.

Arch. That's more than you could expect already. But what money have we left?

Aim. But two hundred pound.

Arch. And our horses, clothes, rings, etc. — Why, we have very good fortunes now for moderate people; and let me tell you, that this two hundred pound, with the experience that we are now masters of, is a better estate than the ten we have spent. — Our friends, indeed, began to suspect that our pockets were low; but we came off with flying colors, showed no signs of want either in word or deed.

Aim. Ay, and our going to Brussels was a good pretence enough for our sudden disappearing; and, I warrant you, our friends imagine that we are gone a-volunteering.

Arch. Why, faith, if this prospect fails, it must e'en come to that. I am for venturing one of the hundreds, if you will, upon this knight-errantry; but, in case it should fail, we'll reserve t'other to carry us to some counterscarp, where we may die, as we lived, in a blaze.

Aim. With all my heart; and we have lived justly, Archer; we can't say that we have spent our fortunes, but that we have enjoyed 'em.

Arch. Right! So much pleasure for so much money, we have had our pennyworths, and, had I millions, I would go to the same market again. — O London, London! — Well, we have had our share, and let us be thankful; past pleasures, for aught I know, are best, such as we are sure of: those to come may disappoint us.

Aim. It has often grieved the heart of me to see how some inhuman wretches murder their kind fortunes; those that, by sacrificing all to one appetite, shall starve all the rest. — You shall have some that live only in their palates, and in their sense of tasting shall drown the other four. Others are only epicures in appearances, such who shall starve their nights to make a figure a-days, and famish their own to feed the eyes of others. A contrary sort confine their pleasures to the dark, and contract their specious acres to the circuit of a muff-string.

Arch. Right! But they find the Indies in that spot where they consume 'em, and I think your kind keepers have much the best on't; for they indulge the most senses by one expense. There's the seeing, hearing, and feeling, amply gratified; and, some philosophers will tell you that from such a commerce there arises a sixth sense, that gives infinitely more pleasure than the other five put together.

Aim. And to pass to the other extremity, of all keepers I think those the worst that keep their money.

Arch. Those are the most miserable wights in being; they destroy the rights of nature, and disappoint the blessings of Providence. Give me a man that keeps his five senses keen and bright as his sword, that has 'em always drawn out in their just order and strength, with his reason as commander at the head of 'em; that detaches 'em by turns upon whatever party of pleasure agreeably offers, and commands 'em to retreat upon the least appearance of disadvantage or danger! For my part, I can stick to my bottle while my wine, my company, and my reason, hold good; I can be charmed with Sappho's singing without falling in love with her face; I love hunting, but would not, like Actæon, be eaten up by my own dogs; I love a fine house, but let another keep it; and just so I love a fine woman.

Aim. In that last particular you have the better of me.

Arch. Ay, you're such an amorous puppy, that I'm afraid you'll spoil our sport; you can't counterfeit the passion without feeling it.

Aim. Though the whining part be out of doors in town, 'tis still in force with the country ladies; and let me tell you, Frank, the fool in that passion shall outdo the knave at any time.

Arch. Well, I won't dispute it now; you command for the day, and so I submit. — At Nottingham, you know, I am to be master.

Aim. And at Lincoln, I again.

Arch. Then, at Norwich I mount, which, I think, shall be our last stage; for, if we fail there, we'll embark for Holland, bid adieu to Venus, and welcome Mars.

Aim. A match!

([*Re-*]*enter* Boniface.)

Mum!

Bon. What will your worship please to have for supper?

Aim. What have you got?

Bon. Sir, we have a delicate piece of beef in the pot, and a pig at the fire.

Aim. Good supper-meat, I must confess. — I can't eat beef, landlord.

Arch. And I hate pig.

Aim. Hold your prating, sirrah! Do you know who you are?

Bon. Please to bespeak something else; I have everything in the house.

Aim. Have you any veal?

Bon. Veal! Sir, we had a delicate loin of veal on Wednesday last.

Aim. Have you got any fish or wildfowl?

Bon. As for fish, truly, sir, we are an inland town, and indifferently provided with fish, that's the truth on't; and then for wildfowl — we have a delicate couple of rabbits.

Aim. Get me the rabbits fricasseed.

Bon. Fricasseed! Lard, sir, they'll eat much better smothered with onions.

Arch. Pshaw! Damn your onions!

Aim. Again, sirrah! — Well, landlord, what you please. But hold, I have a small charge of money, and your house is so full of strangers, that I believe it may be safer in your custody than mine; for when this fellow of mine gets drunk, he minds nothing. — Here, sirrah, reach me the strong-box.

Arch. Yes, sir. — (*Aside.*) This will give us a reputation. (*Brings the box.*)

Aim. Here, landlord; the locks are sealed down both for your security and mine; it holds somewhat above two hundred pound; if you doubt it, I'll count it to you after supper; but be sure you lay it where I may have it at a minute's warning; for my affairs are a little dubious at present; perhaps I may be gone in half an hour, perhaps I may be your guest till the best part of that be spent; and pray order your ostler to keep my horses always saddled. But one thing above the rest I must beg, that you would let this fellow have none of your *Anno Domini*, as you call it; for he's the most insufferable sot. — Here, sirrah, light me to my chamber.

(*Exit, lighted by* Archer.)

Bon. Cherry! Daughter Cherry!

([*Re-*]*enter* Cherry.)

Cher. D'ye call, father?

Bon. Ay, child, you must lay by this box for the gentleman; 'tis full of money.

Cher. Money! all that money! Why, sure, father, the gentleman comes to be chosen parliament-man. Who is he?

Bon. I don't know what to make of him; he talks of keeping his horses ready saddled, and of going perhaps at a minute's warning, or of staying perhaps till the best part of this be spent.

Cher. Ay, ten to one, father, he's a highwayman.

Bon. A highwayman! Upon my life, girl, you have hit it, and this box is some new-purchased booty. — Now, could we find him out, the money were ours.

Cher. He don't belong to our gang.

Bon. What horses have they?

Cher. The master rides upon a black.

Bon. A black! ten to one the man upon the black mare; and since he don't belong to our fraternity, we may betray him with a safe conscience. I don't think it lawful to harbor any rogues but my own. — Look ye, child, as the saying is, we must go cunningly to work; proofs we must have. The gentleman's servant loves drink, I'll ply him that way; and ten to one loves a wench, — you must work him t'other way.

Cher. Father, would you have me give my secret for his?

Bon. Consider, child, there's two hundren pound to boot. — (*Ringing without.*) Coming! coming! — Child, mind your business. [*Exit.*]

Cher. What a rogue is my father! My father! I deny it. — My mother was a good, generous, free-hearted woman, and I can't tell how far her good nature might have extended for the good of her children. This landlord of mine, for I think I can call him no more, would betray his guest, and debauch his daughter into the bargain, — by a footman too!

([*Re-*]*enter* Archer.)

Arch. What footman, pray, mistress, is so happy as to be the subject of your contemplation?

Cher. Whoever he is, friend, he'll be but little the better for't.

Arch. I hope so, for I'm sure you did not think of me.

Cher. Suppose I had?

Arch. Why, then you're but even with me; for the minute I came in, I was a-considering in what manner I should make love to you.

Cher. Love to me, friend!

Arch. Yes, child.

Cher. Child! manners! — If you kept a little more distance, friend, it would become you much better.

Arch. Distance! Good-night, sauce-box. (*Going*)

Cher. [*aside*]. A pretty fellow! I like his pride. — [*Aloud.*] Sir, pray, sir, you see, sir, (Archer *returns*) I have the credit to be entrusted with your master's fortune here, which sets me a degree above his footman; I hope, sir, you an't affronted?

Arch. Let me look you full in the face, and I'll tell you whether you can affront me or no. — 'Sdeath, child, you have a pair of delicate eyes, and you don't know what to do with 'em!

Cher. Why, sir, don't I see everybody?

Arch. Ay, but if some women had 'em, they would kill everybody. — Prithee, instruct me, I would fain make love to you, but I don't know what to say.

Cher. Why, did you never make love to anybody before?

Arch. Never to a person of your figure, I can assure you, madam. My addresses have been always confined to people within my own sphere; I never aspired so high before. (*A song.*)

But you look so bright,
And are dress'd so tight,
[That a man would swear you're right,
As arm was e'er laid over.
Such an air
You freely wear
To ensnare,
As makes each guest a lover!

Since then, my dear, I'm your guest,
Prithee give me of the best
Of what is ready drest:
Since then, my dear, etc.]

Cher. (*aside*). What can I think of this man? — [*Aloud.*] Will you give me that song, sir?

Arch. Ay, my dear, take it while 'tis warm. — (*Kisses her.*) Death and fire! her lips are honeycombs.

Cher. And I wish there had been bees too, to have stung you for your impudence.

Arch. There's a swarm of Cupids, my little Venus, that has done the business much better.

Cher. (*aside*). This fellow is misbegotten as well as I. — [*Aloud.*] What's your name, sir?

Arch. (*aside*). Name! egad, I have forgot it. — [*Aloud.*] Oh! Martin.

Cher. Where were you born?

Arch. In St. Martin's parish.

Cher. What was your father?

Arch. St. Martin's parish.

Cher. Then, friend, good-night.

Arch. I hope not.

Cher. You may depend upon't.

Arch. Upon what?

Cher. That you're very impudent.

Arch. That you're very handsome.

Cher. That you're a footman.

Arch. That you're an angel.

Cher. I shall be rude.

Arch. So shall I.

Cher. Let go my hand.

Arch. Give me a kiss. (*Kisses her.*)

(*Call without.*) Cherry! Cherry!

Cher. I'm-m — my father calls; you

plaguy devil, how durst you stop my breath so? — Offer to follow me one step, if you dare. (*Exit.*)

Arch. A fair challenge, by this light! This is a pretty fair opening of an adventure; but we are knight-errants, and so Fortune be our guide. (*Exit.*)

ACT II.

Scene [I.] — *A Gallery in* Lady Bountiful's *House*

(Mrs. Sullen *and* Dorinda, *meeting.*)

Dor. Morrow, my dear sister; are you for church this morning?

Mrs. Sul. Anywhere to pray; for Heaven alone can help me. But I think, Dorinda, there's no form of prayer in the liturgy against bad husbands.

Dor. But there's a form of law in Doctors-Commons; and I swear, sister Sullen, rather than see you thus continually discontented, I would advise you to apply to that: for besides the part that I bear in your vexatious broils, as being sister to the husband, and friend to the wife, your example gives me such an impression of matrimony, that I shall be apt to condemn my person to a long vacation all its life. — But supposing, madam, that you brought it to a case of separation, what can you urge against your husband? My brother is, first, the most constant man alive.

Mrs. Sul. The most constant husband, I grant ye.

Dor. He never sleeps from you.

Mrs. Sul. No, he always sleeps with me.

Dor. He allows you a maintenance suitable to your quality.

Mrs. Sul. A maintenance! Do you take me, madam, for an hospital child, that I must sit down, and bless my benefactors for meat, drink, and clothes? As I take it, madam, I brought your brother ten thousand pounds, out of which I might expect some pretty things, called pleasures.

Dor. You share in all the pleasures that the country affords.

Mrs. Sul. Country pleasures! Racks and torments! Dost think, child, that my limbs were made for leaping of ditches, and clamb'ring over stiles? or that my parents, wisely foreseeing my future happiness in country pleasures, had early instructed me in rural accomplishments of drinking fat ale, playing at whisk, and smoking tobacco with my husband? or of spreading of plasters, brewing of diet-drinks, and stilling rosemary-water, with the good old gentlewoman, my mother-in-law?

Dor. I'm sorry, madam, that it is not more in our power to divert you; I could wish, indeed, that our entertainments were a little more polite, or your taste a little less refined. But, pray, madam, how came the poets and philosophers, that labored so much in hunting after pleasure, to place it at last in a country life?

Mrs. Sul. Because they wanted money, child, to find out the pleasures of the town. Did you ever see a poet or philosopher worth ten thousand pound? If you can show me such a man, I'll lay you fifty pound you'll find him somewhere within the weekly bills. — Not that I disapprove rural pleasures, as the poets have painted them; in their landscape, every Phyllis has her Corydon, every murmuring stream, and every flow'ry mead, gives fresh alarms to love. — Besides, you'll find that their couples were never married. — But yonder I see my Corydon, and a sweet swain it is, Heaven knows! Come, Dorinda, don't be angry, he's my husband, and your brother; and, between both, is he not a sad brute?

Dor. I have nothing to say to your part of him, — you're the best judge.

Mrs. Sul. O sister, sister! if ever you marry, beware of a sullen, silent sot, one that's always musing, but never thinks. — There's some diversion in a talking blockhead; and since a woman must wear chains, I would have the pleasure of hearing 'em rattle a little. — Now you shall see, but take this by the way. — He came home this morning at his usual hour of four, wakened me out of a sweet dream of something else, by tumbling over the tea-table, which he broke all to pieces; after his man and he had rolled about the room, like sick passengers in a storm, he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon into a fishmonger's basket; his feet cold as ice, his breath hot as a furnace, and his hands and his face as greasy as his flannel night-cap. — O matrimony! — He tosses up the clothes with a barbarous swing over his shoulders, disorders the whole economy of my bed, leaves me half naked, and my whole night's comfort is the tuneable serenade of that wakeful nightingale, his nose! — Oh, the pleasure of counting the melancholy clock by a snoring husband! — But now, sister, you shall see how handsomely, being a well-bred man, he will beg my pardon.

(*Enter* Sullen.)

Sul. My head aches consumedly.

Mrs. Sul. Will you be pleased, my dear, to drink tea with us this morning? It may do your head good.

Sul. No.

Dor. Coffee, brother?

Sul. Pshaw!

Mrs. Sul. Will you please to dress, and go to church with me? The air may help you.

Sul. [*calls.*] Scrub!

(*Enter* Scrub.)

Scrub. Sir.

Sul. What day o' th' week is this?

Scrub. Sunday, an't please your worship.

Sul. Sunday! Bring me a dram; and d'ye hear, set out the venison-pasty, and a tankard of strong beer upon the hall-table; I'll go to breakfast. (*Going.*)

Dor. Stay, stay, brother, you shan't get off so; you were very naught last night, and must make your wife reparation; come, come, brother, won't you ask pardon?

Sul. For what?

Dor. For being drunk last night.

Sul. I can afford it, can't I?

Mrs. Sul. But I can't, sir.

Sul. Then you may let it alone.

Mrs. Sul. But I must tell you, sir, that this is not to be borne.

Sul. I'm glad on't.

Mrs. Sul. What is the reason, sir, that you use me thus inhumanly?

Sul. Scrub!

Scrub. Sir.

Sul. Get things ready to shave my head. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. Sul. Have a care of coming near his temples, Scrub, for fear you meet something there that may turn the edge of your razor. — [*Exit* Scrub.] Inveterate stupidity! did you ever know so hard, so obstinate a spleen as his? O sister, sister! I shall never ha' good of the beast till I get him to town: London, dear London, is the place for managing and breaking a husband.

Dor. And has not a husband the same opportunities there for humbling a wife?

Mrs. Sul. No, no, child, 'tis a standing maxim in conjugal discipline, that when a man would enslave his wife, he hurries her into the country; and when a lady would be arbitrary with her husband, she wheedles her booby up to town. — A man dare not play the tyrant in London, because there are so many examples to encourage the subject to rebel. O Dorinda, Dorinda! a fine woman may do anything in London: o' my conscience, she may raise an army of forty thousand men.

Dor. I fancy, sister, you have a mind to be trying your power that way here in Lichfield; you have drawn the French count to your colors already.

Mrs. Sul. The French are a people that can't live without their gallantries.

Dor. And some English that I know, sister, are not averse to such amusements.

Mrs. Sul. Well, sister, since the truth must out, it may do as well now as hereafter; I think one way to rouse my lethargic, sottish husband is to give him a rival. Security begets negligence in all people, and men must be alarmed to make 'em alert in their duty. Women are like pictures, of no value in the hands of a fool, till he hears men of sense bid high for the purchase.

Dor. This might do, sister, if my brother's understanding were to be convinced into a passion for you; but I fancy there's a natural aversion on his side; and I fancy, sister, that you don't come much behind him, if you dealt fairly.

Mrs. Sul. I own it, we are united contradictions, fire and water. But I could be contented, with a great many other wives, to humor the censorious mob, and give the world an appearance of living well with my husband, could I bring him but to dissemble a little kindness to keep me in countenance.

Dor. But how do you know, sister, but that, instead of rousing your husband by this artifice to a counterfeit kindness, he should awake in a real fury?

Mrs. Sul. Let him: if I can't entice him to the one, I would provoke him to the other.

Dor. But how must I behave myself between ye?

Mrs. Sul. You must assist me.

Dor. What, against my own brother!

Mrs. Sul. He's but half a brother, and I'm your entire friend. If I go a step beyond the bounds of honor, leave me; till then, I expect you should go along with me in everything; while I trust my honor in your hands, you may trust your brother's in mine. — The count is to dine here today.

Dor. 'Tis a strange thing, sister, that I can't like that man.

Mrs. Sul. You like nothing; your time is not come. Love and death have their fatalities, and strike home one time or other. — You'll pay for all one day, I warrant ye. — But come, my lady's tea is ready, and 'tis almost church time.

(*Exeunt.*)

Scene [II.] — *The Inn*

(*Enter* Aimwell *dressed, and* Archer.)

Aim. And was she the daughter of the house?

Arch. The landlord is so blind as to think so; but I dare swear she has better blood in her veins.

Aim. Why dost think so?

Arch. Because the baggage has a pert *je ne sais quoi;* she reads plays, keeps a monkey, and is troubled with vapors.

Aim. By which discoveries I guess that you know more of her.

Arch. Not yet, faith; the lady gives herself airs; forsooth, nothing under a gentleman!

Aim. Let me take her in hand.

Arch. Say one word more o' that, and I'll declare myself, spoil your sport there, and everywhere else; look ye, Aimwell, every man in his own sphere.

Aim. Right; and therefore you must pimp for your master.

Arch. In the usual forms, good sir, after I have served myself. — But to our business. — You are so well dressed, Tom, and make so handsome a figure, that I fancy you may do execution in a country church; the exterior part strikes first, and you're in the right to make that impression favorable.

Aim. There's something in that which may turn to advantage. The appearance of a stranger in a country church draws as many gazers as a blazing-star; no sooner he comes into the cathedral, but a train of whispers runs buzzing round the congregation in a moment: Who is he? Whence comes he? Do you know him? — Then I sir, tips me the verger with half a crown; he pockets the simony, and inducts me into the best pew in the church. I pull out my snuff-box, turn myself round, bow to the bishop, or the dean, if he be the commanding officer; single out a beauty, rivet both my eyes to hers, set my nose a-bleeding by the strength of imagination, and show the whole church my concern by my endeavoring to hide it. After the sermon, the whole town gives me to her for a lover, and by persuading the lady that I am a-dying for her, the tables are turned, and she in good earnest falls in love with me.

Arch. There's nothing in this, Tom, without a precedent; but instead of riveting your eyes to a beauty, try to fix 'em upon a fortune; that's our business at present.

Aim. Pshaw! no woman can be a beauty without a fortune. Let me alone, for I am a marksman.

Arch. Tom!

Aim. Ay.

Arch. When were you at church before, pray?

Aim. Um — I was there at the coronation.

Arch. And how can you expect a blessing by going to church now?

Aim. Blessing! nay, Frank, I ask but for a wife.

(*Exit.*)

Arch. Truly, the man is not very unreasonable in his demands.

(*Exit at the opposite door.*)

(*Enter* Boniface *and* Cherry.)

Bon. Well, daughter, as the saying is, have you brought Martin to confess?

Cher. Pray, father, don't put me upon getting anything out of a man; I'm but young, you know, father, and I don't understand wheedling.

Bon. Young! why, you jade, as the saying is, can any woman wheedle that is not young? Your mother was useless at five-and-twenty. Not wheedle! would you make your mother a whore, and me a cuckold, as the saying is? I tell you his silence confesses it, and his master spends his money so freely, and is so much a gentleman every manner of way, that he must be a highwayman.

(*Enter* Gibbet, *in a cloak.*)

Gib. Landlord, landlord, is the coast clear?

Bon. O Mr. Gibbet, what's the news?

Gib. No matter, ask no questions, all fair and honorable. — Here, my dear Cherry. — (*Gives her a bag.*) Two hundred sterling pounds, as good as any that ever hanged or saved a rogue; lay 'em by with the rest; and here — three wedding or mourning rings, 'tis much the same, you know. — Here, two silver-hilted swords; I took those from fellows that never show any part of their swords but the hilts. Here is a diamond necklace which the lady hid in the privatest place in the coach, but I found it out. This gold watch I took from a pawnbroker's wife; it was left in her hands by a person of quality — there's the arms upon the case.

Cher. But who had you the money from?

Gib. Ah! poor woman! I pitied her; — from a poor lady just eloped from her husband. She had made up her cargo, and was bound for Ireland, as hard as she could drive; she told me of her husband's barbarous usage, and so I left her half a crown. But I had almost forgot, my dear Cherry, I have a present for you.

Cher. What is't?

Gib. A pot of ceruse, my child, that I took out of a lady's under-pocket.

Cher. What! Mr. Gibbet, do you think that I paint?

Gib. Why, you jade, your betters do; I'm sure the lady that I took it from had a coronet upon her handkerchief. — Here, take my cloak, and go, secure the premises.

Cher. I will secure 'em.

(*Exit.*)

Bon. But, hark ye, where's Hounslow and Bagshot?

Gib. They'll be here to-night.

Bon. D'ye know of any other gentlemen o' the pad on this road?

Gib. No.

Bon. I fancy that I have two that lodge in the house just now.

Gib. The devil! How d'ye smoke 'em?

Bon. Why, the one is gone to church.

Gib. That's suspicious, I must confess.

Bon. And the other is now in his master's chamber; he pretends to be servant to the other. We'll call him out and pump him a little.

Gib. With all my heart.

Bon. [*calls.*] Mr. Martin! Mr. Martin!

(*Enter* [Archer,] *combing a periwig and singing.*)

Gib. The roads are consumed deep; I'm as dirty as Old Brentford at Christmas. — A good pretty fellow that. Whose servant are you, friend?

Arch. My master's.

Gib. Really!

Arch. Really.

Gib. That's much. — The fellow has been at the bar by his evasions. —

But pray, sir, what is your master's name?

Arch. *Tall, all dall!* — (*Sings and combs the periwig.*) This is the most obstinate curl ——

Gib. I ask you his name.

Arch. Name, sir — *tall, all dall!* — I never asked him his name in my life. — *Tall, all dall!*

Bon. [*aside to* Gibbet]. What think you now?

Gib. [*aside to* Boniface]. Plain, plain; he talks now as if he were before a judge. — [*To* Archer.] But pray, friend, which way does your master travel?

Arch. A-horseback.

Gib. [*aside*]. Very well again, an old offender, right. — [*To* Archer.] But I mean, does he go upwards or downwards?

Arch. Downwards, I fear, sir. — *Tall, all!*

Gib. I'm afraid my fate will be a contrary way.

Bon. Ha, ha, ha! Mr. Martin, you're very arch. — This gentleman is only travelling towards Chester, and would be glad of your company, that's all. — Come, Captain, you'll stay to-night, I suppose? I'll show you a chamber. — Come, Captain.

Gib. Farewell, friend!

Arch. Captain, your servant. — [*Exeunt* Boniface *and* Gibbet.] Captain! a pretty fellow! 'Sdeath, I wonder that the officers of the army don't conspire to beat all scoundrels in red but their own.

([*Re*]*enter* Cherry.)

Cher. (*aside*). Gone! and Martin here! I hope he did not listen; I would have the merit of the discovery all my own, because I would oblige him to love me. — [*Aloud.*] Mr. Martin, who was that man with my father?

Arch. Some recruiting sergeant, or whipped-out trooper, I suppose.

Cher. [*aside*]. All's safe, I find.

Arch. Come, my dear, have you conned over the catechise I taught you last night?

Cher. Come, question me.

Arch. What is love?

Cher. Love is I know not what, it comes I know not how, and goes I know not when.

Arch. Very well, an apt scholar. — (*Chucks her under the chin.*) Where does love enter?

Cher. Into the eyes.

Arch. And where go out?

Cher. I won't tell ye.

Arch. What are [the] objects of that passion?

Cher. Youth, beauty, and clean linen.

Arch. The reason?

Cher. The two first are fashionable in nature, and the third at court.

Arch. That's my dear. — What are the signs and tokens of that passion?

Cher. A stealing look, a stammering tongue, words improbable, designs impossible, and actions inpracticable.

Arch. That's my good child, kiss me. — What must a lover do to obtain his mistress?

Cher. He must adore the person that disdains him, he must bribe the chambermaid that betrays him, and court the footman that laughs at him. — He must, he must ——

Arch. Nay, child, I must whip you if you don't mind your lesson; he must treat his ——

Cher. Oh, ay! — he must treat his enemies with respect, his friends with indifference, and all the world with contempt; he must suffer much, and fear more; he must desire much, and hope little; in short, he must embrace his ruin, and throw himself away.

Arch. Had ever man so hopeful a pupil as mine! — Come, my dear, why is love called a riddle?

Cher. Because, being blind, he leads those that see, and, though a child, he governs a man.

Arch. Mighty well! — And why is Love pictured blind?

Cher. Because the painters out of the weakness or privilege of their art chose to hide those eyes that they could not draw.

Arch. That's my dear little scholar, kiss me again. — And why should Love, that's a child, govern a man?

Cher. Because that a child is the end of love.

Arch. And so ends Love's catechism. — And now, my dear, we'll go in and make my master's bed.

Cher. Hold, hold, Mr. Martin! — You have taken a great deal of pains to instruct me, and what d'ye think I have learned by it?

Arch. What?

Cher. That your discourse and your habit are contradictions, and it would be nonsense in me to believe you a footman any longer.

Arch. 'Oons, what a witch it is!

Cher. Depend upon this, sir, nothing in this garb shall ever tempt me; for, though I was born to servitude, I hate it. — Own your condition, swear you love me, and then ——

Arch. And then we shall go make the bed?

Cher. Yes.

Arch. You must know, then, that I am born a gentleman, my education was liberal; but I went to London a younger brother, fell into the hands of sharpers, who stripped me of my money; my friends disowned me, and now my necessity brings me to what you see.

Cher. Then take my hand — promise to marry me before you sleep, and I'll make you master of two thousand pound.

Arch. How?

Cher. Two thousand pound that I have this minute in my own custody; so, throw off your livery this instant, and I'll go find a parson.

Arch. What said you? A parson!

Cher. What! do you scruple?

Arch. Scruple! no, no, but — Two thousand pound, you say?

Cher. And better.

Arch. [*aside*]. 'Sdeath, what shall I do? — [*Aloud.*] But hark'ee, child, what need you make me master of yourself and money, when you may have the same pleasure out of me, and still keep your fortune in your hands?

Cher. Then you won't marry me?

Arch. I would marry you, but ——

Cher. O sweet sir, I'm your humble servant, you're fairly caught! Would you persuade me that any gentleman who could bear the scandal of wearing a livery would refuse two thousand pound, let the condition be what it would? — No, no, sir. — But I hope you'll pardon the freedom I have taken, since it was only to inform myself of the respect that I ought to pay you. (*Going.*)

Arch. [*aside*]. Fairly bit, by Jupiter! — [*Aloud.*] Hold! hold! — And have you actually two thousand pound?

Cher. Sir, I have my secrets as well as you; when you please to be more open, I shall be more free, and be assured that I have discoveries that will match yours, be what they will. In the meanwhile, be satisfied that no discovery I make shall ever hurt you; but beware of my father! [*Exit.*]

Arch. So! we're like to have as many adventures in our inn as Don Quixote had in his. Let me see — two thousand pound! — If the wench would promise to die when the money were spent, egad, one would marry her; but the fortune may go off in a year or two, and the wife may live — Lord knows how long. Then an innkeeper's daughter! ay, that's the devil — there my pride brings me off.

For whatsoe'er the sages charge on pride,
The angels' fall, and twenty faults beside,
On earth, I'm sure, 'mong us of mortal calling,
Pride saves man oft, and woman too, from falling. (*Exit.*)

ACT III.

Scene [I. — *The Gallery in* Lady Bountiful's *House*]

(*Enter* Mrs. Sullen [*and*] Dorinda.)

Mrs. Sul. Ha, ha, ha! my dear sister, let me embrace thee! Now we are friends indeed; for I shall have a secret of yours as a pledge for mine. — Now you'll be good for something; I shall have you conversable in the subjects of the sex.

Dor. But do you think that I am so

weak as to fall in love with a fellow at first sight?

Mrs. Sul. Pshaw! now you spoil all; why should not we be as free in our friendships as the men? I warrant you the gentleman has got to his confidant already, has avowed his passion, toasted your health, called you ten thousand angels, has run over your lips, eyes, neck, shape, air, and everything, in a description that warms their mirth to a second enjoyment.

Dor. Your hand, sister, I an't well.

Mrs. Sul. So — she's breeding already! — Come, child, up with it — hem a little — so — now tell me, don't you like the gentleman that we saw at church just now?

Dor. The man's well enough.

Mrs. Sul. Well enough! is he not a demigod, a Narcissus, a star, the man i' the moon?

Dor. O sister, I'm extremely ill!

Mrs. Sul. Shall I send to your mother, child, for a little of her cephalic plaster to put to the soles of your feet, or shall I send to the gentleman for something for you? — Come, unlace your stays, unbosom yourself. — The man is perfectly a pretty fellow; I saw him when he first came into church.

Dor. I saw him too, sister, and with an air that shone, methought, like rays about his person.

Mrs. Sul. Well said, up with it!

Dor. No forward coquette behavior, no airs to set him off, no studied looks nor artful posture — but Nature did it all ——

Mrs. Sul. Better and better! — One touch more — come!

Dor. But then his looks — did you observe his eyes?

Mrs. Sul. Yes, yes, I did. — His eyes, well, what of his eyes?

Dor. Sprightly, but not wandering; they seemed to view, but never gazed on anything but me. — And then his looks so humble were, and yet so noble, that they aimed to tell me that he could with pride die at my feet, though he scorned slavery anywhere else.

Mrs. Sul. The physic works purely! — How d'ye find yourself now, my dear?

Dor. Hem! much better, my dear. — Oh, here comes our Mercury!

(*Enter* Scrub.)

Well, Scrub, what news of the gentleman?

Scrub. Madam, I have brought you a packet of news.

Dor. Open it quickly, come.

Scrub. In the first place I inquired who the gentleman was; they told me he was a stranger. Secondly, I asked what the gentleman was; they answered and said, that they never saw him before. Thirdly, I inquired what countryman he was; they replied, 'twas more than they knew. Fourthly, I demanded whence he came; their answer was, they could not tell. And, fifthly, I asked whither he went; and they replied, they knew nothing of the matter, — and this is all I could learn.

Mrs. Sul. But what do the people say? Can't they guess?

Scrub. Why, some think he's a spy, some guess he's a mountebank, some say one thing, some another; but for my own part, I believe he's a Jesuit.

Dor. A Jesuit! Why a Jesuit?

Scrub. Because he keeps his horses always ready saddled, and his footman talks French.

Mrs. Sul. His footman!

Scrub. Ay, he and the count's footman were jabbering French like two intriguing ducks in a mill-pond; and I believe they talked of me, for they laughed consumedly.

Dor. What sort of livery has the footman?

Scrub. Livery! Lord, madam, I took him for a captain, he's so bedizened with lace! And then he has tops to his shoes, up to his mid leg, a silver-headed cane dangling at his knuckles; he carries his hands in his pockets just so — (*walks in the French air*) — and has a fine long periwig tied up in a bag. — Lord, madam, he's clear another sort of man than I!

Mrs. Sul. That may easily be. — But what shall we do now, sister?

Dor. I have it. — This fellow has a world of simplicity, and some cunning; the first hides the latter by abundance. — Scrub!

Scrub. Madam!

Dor. We have a great mind to know who this gentleman is, only for our satisfaction.

Scrub. Yes, madam, it would be a satisfaction, no doubt.

Dor. You must go and get acquainted with his footman, and invite him hither to drink a bottle of your ale, because you're butler to-day.

Scrub. Yes, madam, I am butler every Sunday.

Mrs. Sul. O brave, sister! O' my conscience, you understand the mathematics already. 'Tis the best plot in the world: your mother, you know, will be gone to church, my spouse will be got to the alehouse with his scoundrels, and the house will be our own — so we drop in by accident, and ask the fellow some questions ourselves. In the country, you know, any stranger is company, and we're glad to take up with the butler in a country-dance, and happy if he'll do us the favor.

Scrub. Oh! Madam, you wrong me! I never refused your ladyship the favor in my life.

(*Enter* Gipsy.)

Gip. Ladies, dinner's upon table.

Dor. Scrub, we'll excuse your waiting — go where we ordered you.

Scrub. I shall. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene [II.] — *The Inn*

(*Enter* Aimwell *and* Archer.)

Arch. Well, Tom, I find you're a marksman.

Aim. A marksman! who so blind could be, as not discern a swan among the ravens?

Arch. Well, but hark'ee, Aimwell —

Aim. Aimwell! Call me Oroondates. Cesario, Amadis, all that romance can in a lover paint, and then I'll answer. O Archer! I read her thousands in her looks, she looked like Ceres in her harvest: corn, wine, and oil, milk and honey, gardens, groves, and purling streams played on her plenteous face.

Arch. Her face! her pocket, you mean; the corn, wine, and oil lies there. In short, she has ten thousand pound, that's the English on't.

Aim. Her eyes ——

Arch. Are demi-cannons, to be sure; so I won't stand their battery. (*Going.*)

Aim. Pray excuse me, my passion must have vent.

Arch. Passion! what a plague, d'ee think these romantic airs will do our business? Were my temper as extravagant as yours, my adventures have something more romantic by half.

Aim. Your adventures!

Arch. Yes;

The nymph that with her twice ten hundred pounds,
With brazen engine hot, and quoif clear starched,
Can fire the guest in warming of the bed ——

There's a touch of sublime Milton for you, and the subject but an innkeeper's daughter! I can play with a girl as an angler does with his fish; he keeps it at the end of his line, runs it up the stream, and down the stream, till at last he brings it to hand, tickles the trout, and so whips it into his basket.

(*Enter* Boniface.)

Bon. Mr. Martin, as the saying is — yonder's an honest fellow below, my Lady Bountiful's butler, who begs the honor that you would go home with him and see his cellar.

Arch. Do my *baise-mains* to the gentleman, and tell him I will do myself the honor to wait on him immediately. (*Exit* Boniface.)

Aim. What do I hear?

Soft Orpheus play, and fair Toftida sing!

Arch. Pshaw! damn your raptures! I tell you, here's a pump going to be put into the vessel, and the ship will get into harbor, my life on't. You say there's another lady very handsome there?

Aim. Yes, faith.

Arch. I am in love with her already.

Aim. Can't you give me a bill upon Cherry in the meantime?

Arch. No, no, friend, all her corn, wine, and oil is ingrossed to my market. — And once more I warn you to keep your anchorage clear of mine; for if you fall foul of me, by this light you shall go to the bottom! — What! make prize of my little frigate, while I am upon the cruise for you! ——

Aim. Well, well, I won't. —

✓(*Exit* Archer.)

([*Re*-]*enter* Boniface.)

Landlord, have you any tolerable company in the house? I don't care for dining alone.

Bon. Yes, sir, there's a captain below, as the saying is, that arrived about an hour ago.

Aim. Gentlemen of his coat are welcome everywhere; will you make him a compliment from me, and tell him I should be glad of his company?

Bon. Who shall I tell him, sir, would ——

Aim. Ha! that stroke was well thrown in! — I'm only a traveller like himself, and would be glad of his company, that's all.

Bon. I obey your commands, as the saying is.

(*Exit.*)

([*Re*-]*enter* Archer.)

Arch. 'Sdeath! I had forgot; what title will you give yourself?

Aim. My brother's, to be sure; he would never give me anything else, so I'll make bold with his honor this bout. — You know the rest of your cue.

Arch. Ay, ay. [*Exit.*]

(*Enter* Gibbet.)

Gib. Sir, I'm yours.

Aim. 'Tis more than I deserve, sir, for I don't know you.

Gib. I don't wonder at that, sir, for you never saw me before — (*aside*) I hope.

Aim. And pray, sir, how came I by the honor of seeing you now?

Gib. Sir, I scorn to intrude upon any gentleman — but my landlord——

Aim. O sir, I ask your pardon! You're the captain he told me of?

Gib. At your service, sir.

Aim. What regiment, may I be so bold?

Gib. A marching regiment, sir, an old corps.

Aim. (*aside*). Very old, if your coat be regimental. — [*Aloud.*] You have served abroad, sir?

Gib. Yes, sir — in the plantations; 'twas my lot to be sent into the worst service. I would have quitted it indeed, but a man of honor, you know — Besides, 'twas for the good of my country that I should be abroad. — Anything for the good of one's country — I'm a Roman for that.

Aim. (*aside*). One of the first, I'll lay my life. — [*Aloud.*] You found the West Indies very hot, sir?

Gib. Ay, sir, too hot for me.

Aim. Pray, sir, han't I seen your face at Will's coffee-house?

Gib. Yes, sir, and at White's too.

Aim. And where is your company now, captain?

Gib. They an't come yet.

Aim. Why, d'ye expect 'em here?

Gib. They'll be here to-night, sir.

Aim. Which way do they march?

Gib. Across the country. — (*Aside.*) The devil's in't, if I han't said enough to encourage him to declare! But I'm afraid he's not right; I must tack about.

Aim. Is your company to quarter in Lichfield?

Gib. In this house, sir.

Aim. What! all?

Gib. My company's but thin, ha, ha, ha! we are but three, ha, ha, ha!

Aim. You're merry, sir.

Gib. Ay, sir, you must excuse me, sir; I understand the world, especially the art of travelling; I don't care, sir, for answering questions directly upon the road — for I generally ride with a charge about me.

Aim. (*aside*). Three or four, I believe.

Gib. I am credibly informed that there are highwaymen upon this quarter; not, sir, that I could suspect a gentleman of your figure — but truly, sir, I have got such a way of evasion upon the road, that I don't care for speaking truth to any man.

AIM. Your caution may be necessary. — Then I presume you're no captain?

GIB. Not I, sir; captain is a good travelling name, and so I take it; it stops a great many foolish inquiries that are generally made about gentlemen that travel; it gives a man an air of something, and makes the drawers obedient: — and thus far I am a captain, and no farther.

AIM. And pray, sir, what is your true profession?

GIB. O sir, you must excuse me! — Upon my word, sir, I don't think it safe to tell you.

AIM. Ha, ha, ha! upon my word, I commend you.

([*Re-*]*enter* BONIFACE.)

Well, Mr. Boniface, what's the news?

BON. There's another gentleman below, as the saying is, that hearing you were but two, would be glad to make the third man, if you would give him leave.

AIM. What is he?

BON. A clergyman, as the saying is.

AIM. A clergyman! Is he really a clergyman? or is it only his travelling name, as my friend the captain has it?

BON. O sir, he's a priest, and chaplain to the French officers in town.

AIM. Is he a Frenchman?

BON. Yes, sir, born at Brussels.

GIB. A Frenchman, and a priest! I won't be seen in his company, sir; I have a value for my reputation, sir.

AIM. Nay, but, captain, since we are by ourselves — Can he speak English, landlord?

BON. Very well, sir; you may know him, as the saying is, to be a foreigner by his accent, and that's all.

AIM. Then he has been in England before?

BON. Never, sir; but he's a master of languages, as the saying is. He talks Latin — it does me good to hear him talk Latin.

AIM. Then you understand Latin, Mr. Boniface?

BON. Not I, sir, as the saying is; but he talks it so very fast, that I'm sure it must be good.

AIM. Pray, desire him to walk up.

BON. Here he is, as the saying is.

(*Enter* FOIGARD.)

FOI. Save you, gentlemens, both.

AIM. [*aside*]. A Frenchman! — [*To* FOIGARD.] Sir, your most humble servant.

FOI. Och, dear joy, I am your most faithful shervant, and yours alsho.

GIB. Doctor, you talk very good English, but you have a mighty twang of the foreigner.

FOI. My English is very vel for the vords, but we foreigners, you know, cannot bring our tongues about the pronunciation so soon.

AIM. (*aside*). A foreigner! a downright Teague, by this light! — [*Aloud.*] Were you born in France, doctor?

FOI. I was educated in France, but I was borned at Brussels; I am a subject of the King of Spain, joy.

GIB. What King of Spain, sir? speak!

FOI. Upon my shoul, joy, I cannot tell you as yet.

AIM. Nay, captain, that was too hard upon the doctor; he's a stranger.

FOI. Oh, let him alone, dear joy; I am of a nation that is not easily put out of countenance.

AIM. Come, gentlemen, I'll end the dispute. — Here, landlord, is dinner ready?

BON. Upon the table, as the saying is.

AIM. Gentlemen — pray — that door —

FOI. No, no, fait, the captain must lead.

AIM. No, doctor, the church is our guide.

GIB. Ay, ay, so it is.

(*Exit foremost, they follow.*)

SCENE [III.] — *A Gallery in* LADY BOUNTIFUL'S *House*

(*Enter* ARCHER *and* SCRUB *singing, and hugging one another,* SCRUB *with a tankard in his hand,* GIPSY *listening at a distance.*)

SCRUB. *Tall, all dall!* — Come, my dear boy, let's have that song once more.

Arch. No, no, we shall disturb the family. — But will you be sure to keep the secret?

Scrub. Pho! upon my honor, as I'm a gentleman.

Arch. 'Tis enough. — You must know, then, that my master is the Lord Viscount Aimwell; he fought a duel t'other day in London, wounded his man so dangerously that he thinks fit to withdraw till he hears whether the gentleman's wounds be mortal or not. He never was in this part of England before, so he chose to retire to this place, that's all.

Gip. [*aside*]. And that's enough for me.

(*Exit.*)

Scrub. And where were you when your master fought?

Arch. We never know of our masters' quarrels.

Scrub. No? If our masters in the country here receive a challenge, the first thing they do is to tell their wives; the wife tells the servants, the servants alarm the tenants, and in half an hour you shall have the whole county in arms.

Arch. To hinder two men from doing what they have no mind for. — But if you should chance to talk now of my business?

Scrub. Talk! ay, sir, had I not learned the knack of holding my tongue, I had never lived so long in a great family.

Arch. Ay, ay, to be sure there are secrets in all families.

Scrub. Secrets! ay; — but I'll say no more. — Come, sit down, we'll make an end of our tankard: here ——

[*Gives* Archer *the tankard.*]

Arch. With all my heart; who knows but you and I may come to be better acquainted, eh? — Here's your ladies' healths; you have three, I think, and to be sure there must be secrets among 'em.

[*Drinks.*]

Scrub. Secrets! ay, friend. — I wish I had a friend —

Arch. Am not I your friend? Come, you and I will be sworn brothers.

Scrub. Shall we?

Arch. From this minute. — Give me a kiss — and now, brother Scrub ——

Scrub. And now, brother Martin, I will tell you a secret that will make your hair stand on end. — You must know that I am consumedly in love.

Arch. That's a terrible secret, that's the truth on't.

Scrub. That jade, Gipsy, that was with us just now in the cellar, is the arrantest whore that ever wore a petticoat; and I'm dying for love of her.

Arch. Ha, ha, ha! — Are you in love with her person or her virtue, brother Scrub?

Scrub. I should like virtue best, because it is more durable than beauty; for virtue holds good with some women long, and many a day after they have lost it.

Arch. In the country, I grant ye, where no woman's virtue is lost, till a bastard be found.

Scrub. Ay, could I bring her to a bastard, I should have her all to myself; but I dare not put it upon that lay, for fear of being sent for a soldier. — Pray, brother, how do you gentlemen in London like that same Pressing Act?

Arch. Very ill, brother Scrub; 'tis the worst that ever was made for us. Formerly I remember the good days, when we could dun our masters for our wages, and if they refused to pay us, we could have a warrant to carry 'em before a Justice; but now if we talk of eating, they have a warrant for us, and carry us before three Justices.

Scrub. And to be sure we go, if we talk of eating; for the Justices won't give their own servants a bad example. Now this is my misfortune — I dare not speak in the house, while that jade Gipsy dings about like a fury. — Once I had the better end of the staff.

Arch. And how comes the change now?

Scrub. Why, the mother of all this mischief is a priest.

Arch. A priest!

Scrub. Ay, a damned son of a whore of Babylon, that came over hither to say grace to the French officers, and eat up our provisions. — There's not a day goes over his head without a dinner or supper in this house.

Arch. How came he so familiar in the family?

Scrub. Because he speaks English as if he had lived here all his life; and tells lies as if he had been a traveller from his cradle.

Arch. And this priest, I'm afraid, has converted the affections of your Gipsy.

Scrub. Converted! ay, and perverted, my dear friend: for I'm afraid he has made her a whore and a papist! — But this is not all; there's the French count and Mrs. Sullen, they're in the confederacy, and for some private ends of their own, to be sure.

Arch. A very hopeful family yours, brother Scrub! I suppose the maiden lady has her lover too?

Scrub. Not that I know. She's the best on 'em, that's the truth on't. But they take care to prevent my curiosity, by giving me so much business, that I'm a perfect slave. — What d'ye think is my place in this family?

Arch. Butler, I suppose.

Scrub. Ah, Lord help you! — I'll tell you. — Of a Monday I drive the coach; of a Tuesday I drive the plough; on Wednesday I follow the hounds; a-Thursday I dun the tenants; on Friday I go to market; on Saturday I draw warrants; and a-Sunday I draw beer.

Arch. Ha, ha, ha! if variety be a pleasure in life, you have enough on't, my dear brother. — But what ladies are those?

Scrub. Ours, ours; that upon the right hand is Mrs. Sullen, and the other is Mrs. Dorinda. — Don't mind 'em; sit still, man.

(*Enter* Mrs. Sullen *and* Dorinda.)

Mrs. Sul. I have heard my brother talk of my Lord Aimwell; but they say that his brother is the finer gentleman.

Dor. That's impossible, sister.

Mrs. Sul. He's vastly rich, but very close, they say.

Dor. No matter for that; if I can creep into his heart, I'll open his breast, I warrant him. I have heard say, that people may be guessed at by the behavior of their servants; I could wish we might talk to that fellow.

Mrs. Sul. So do I; for I think he's a very pretty fellow. Come this way, I'll throw out a lure for him presently.

(*They walk a turn towards the opposite side of the stage.*)

Arch. [*aside*]. Corn, wine, and oil indeed! — But, I think, the wife has the greatest plenty of flesh and blood; she should be my choice. — Ah, a, say you so! — (Mrs. Sullen *drops her glove,* Archer *runs, takes it up, and gives it to her.*) Madam — your ladyship's glove.

Mrs. Sul. O sir, I thank you! — [*To* Dorinda.] What a handsome bow the fellow has!

Dor. Bow! why, I have known several footmen come down from London set up here for dancing-masters, and carry off the best fortunes in the country.

Arch. (*aside*). That project, for aught I know, had been better than ours. — [*To* Scrub.] Brother Scrub, why don't you introduce me?

Scrub. Ladies, this is the strange gentleman's servant that you saw at church to-day; I understood he came from London, and so I invited him to the cellar, that he might show me the newest flourish in whetting my knives.

Dor. And I hope you have made much of him?

Arch. Oh yes, madam, but the strength of your ladyship's liquor is a little too potent for the constitution of your humble servant.

Mrs. Sul. What, then you don't usually drink ale?

Arch. No, madam; my constant drink is tea, or a little wine and water. 'Tis prescribed me by the physician for a remedy against the spleen.

Scrub. O la! O la! a footman have the spleen!

Mrs. Sul. I thought that distemper had been only proper to people of quality.

Arch. Madam, like all other fashions it wears out, and so descends to their servants; though in a great many of us, I believe, it proceeds from some melancholy particles in the blood, occasioned by the stagnation of wages.

Dor. [*aside to* Mrs. Sullen]. How affectedly the fellow talks! — [*To* Archer.] How long, pray, have you served your present master?

Arch. Not long; my life has been mostly spent in the service of the ladies.

Mrs. Sul. And pray, which service do you like best?

Arch. Madam, the ladies pay best; the honor of serving them is sufficient wages; there is a charm in their looks that delivers a pleasure with their commands, and gives our duty the wings of inclination.

Mrs. Sul. [*aside*]. The flight was above the pitch of a livery. — [*Aloud.*] And, sir, would not you be satisfied to serve a lady again?

Arch. As a groom of the chamber, madam, but not as a footman.

Mrs. Sul. I suppose you served as footman before?

Arch. For that reason I would not serve in that post again; for my memory is too weak for the load of messages that the ladies lay upon their servants in London. My Lady Howd'ye, the last mistress I served, called me up one morning, and told me, "Martin, go to my Lady Allnight with my humble service; tell her I was to wait on her ladyship yesterday, and left word with Mrs. Rebecca, that the preliminaries of the affair she knows of are stopped till we know the concurrence of the person that I know of, for which there are circumstances wanting which we shall accommodate at the old place; but that in the meantime there is a person about her ladyship that, from several hints and surmises, was accessary at a certain time to the disappointments that naturally attend things, that to her knowledge are of more importance ——"

Mrs. Sul., Dor. Ha, ha, ha! where are you going, sir?

Arch. Why, I han't half done! — The whole howd'ye was about half an hour long; so I happened to misplace two syllables, and was turned off, and rendered incapable.

Dor. [*aside to* Mrs. Sullen]. The pleasantest fellow, sister, I ever saw! — [*To* Archer.] But, friend, if your master be married, I presume you still serve a lady?

Arch. No, madam, I take care never to come into a married family; the commands of the master and mistress are always so contrary, that 'tis impossible to please both.

Dor. (*aside*). There's a main point gained. — My lord is not married, I find.

Mrs. Sul. But I wonder, friend, that in so many good services you had not a better provision made for you.

Arch. I don't know how, madam. — I had a lieutenancy offered me three or four times; but that is not bread, madam — I live much better as I do.

Scrub. Madam, he sings rarely! — I was thought to do pretty well here in the country till he came; but alack a day, I'm nothing to my brother Martin!

Dor. Does he? — Pray, sir, will you oblige us with a song?

Arch. Are you for passion or humor?

Scrub. Oh le! he has the purest ballad about a trifle ——

Mrs. Sul. A trifle! pray, sir, let's have it.

Arch. I'm ashamed to offer you a trifle, madam; but since you command me —

(*Sings to the tune of "Sir Simon the King."*)

A trifling song you shall hear,
Begun with a trifle and ended,
[All trifling people draw near,
And I shall be nobly attended.

Were it not for trifles a few,
That lately have come into play;
The men would want something to do,
And the women want something to say.

What makes men trifle in dressing?
Because the ladies (they know)
Admire, by often possessing,
That eminent trifle, a beau.

When the lover his moments has trifled,
The trifle of trifles to gain,
No sooner the virgin is rifled,
But a trifle shall part 'em again.

What mortal man would be able
At White's half an hour to sit?

Or who could bear a tea-table,
Without talking of trifles for wit?

The court is from trifles secure,
Gold keys are no trifles, we see;
White rods are no trifles, I'm sure,
Whatever their bearers may be.

But if you will go to the place,
Where trifles abundantly breed,
The levee will show you His Grace
Makes promises trifles indeed.

A coach with six footmen behind,
I count neither trifle nor sin:
But, ye gods! how oft do we find
A scandalous trifle within.

A flask of champagne, people think it
A trifle, or something as bad:
But if you'll contrive how to drink it,
You'll find it no trifle, egad!

A parson's a trifle at sea,
A widow's a trifle in sorrow;
A peace is a trifle to-day,
Who knows what may happen to-morrow?

A black coat a trifle may cloak,
Or to hide it, the red may endeavor:
But if once the army is broke,
We shall have more trifles than ever.

The stage is a trifle, they say,
The reason, pray carry along,
Because at ev'ry new play,
The house they with trifles so throng.

But with people's malice to trifle,
And to set us all on a foot:
The author of this is a trifle,
And his song is a trifle to boot.]

Mrs. Sul. Very well, sir, we're obliged to you. — Something for a pair of gloves. (*Offering him money.*)

Arch. I humbly beg leave to be excused: my master, madam, pays me; nor dare I take money from any other hand, without injuring his honor, and disobeying his commands. (*Exit* [*with* Scrub].)

Dor. This is surprising! Did you ever see so pretty a well-bred fellow?

Mrs. Sul. The devil take him for wearing that livery!

Dor. I fancy, sister, he may be some gentleman, a friend of my lord's, that his lordship has pitched upon for his courage, fidelity, and discretion, to bear him company in this dress, and who, ten to one, was his second too.

Mrs. Sul. It is so, it must be so, and it shall be so! — for I like him.

Dor. What! better than the Count?

Mrs. Sul. The Count happened to be the most agreeable man upon the place; and so I chose him to serve me in my design upon my husband. — But I should like this fellow better in a design upon myself.

Dor. But now, sister, for an interview with this lord and this gentleman; how shall we bring that about?

Mrs. Sul. Patience! You country ladies give no quarter if once you be entered. — Would you prevent their desires, and give the fellows no wishing-time? — Look ye, Dorinda, if my Lord Aimwell loves you or deserves you, he'll find a way to see you, and there we must leave it. My business comes now upon the tapis. — Have you prepared your brother?

Dor. Yes, yes.

Mrs. Sul. And how did he relish it?

Dor. He said little, mumbled something to himself, promised to be guided by me — but here he comes.

(*Enter* Sullen.)

Sul. What singing was that I heard just now?

Mrs. Sul. The singing in your head, my dear; you complained of it all day.

Sul. You're impertinent.

Mrs. Sul. I was ever so, since I became one flesh with you.

Sul. One flesh! rather two carcasses joined unnaturally together.

Mrs. Sul. Or rather a living soul coupled to a dead body.

Dor. So, this is fine encouragement for me!

Sul. Yes, my wife shows you what you must do.

Mrs. Sul. And my husband shows you what you must suffer.

Sul. 'Sdeath, why can't you be silent?

Mrs. Sul. 'Sdeath, why can't you talk?

Sul. Do you talk to any purpose?

Mrs. Sul. Do you think to any purpose?

Sul. Sister, hark ye! — (*Whispers.*) I shan't be home till it be late. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. Sul. What did he whisper to ye?

Dor. That he would go round the back way, come into the closet, and listen as I directed him. — But let me beg you once more, dear sister, to drop this project; for as I told you before, instead of awaking him to kindness, you may provoke him to a rage; and then who knows how far his brutality may carry him?

Mrs. Sul. I'm provided to receive him, I warrant you. But here comes the Count — vanish! (*Exit* Dorinda.)

(*Enter* Count Bellair.)

Don't you wonder, Monsieur le Count, that I was not at church this afternoon?

Count Bel. I more wonder, madam, that you go dere at all, or how you dare to lift those eyes to heaven that are guilty of so much killing.

Mrs. Sul. If heaven, sir, has given to my eyes with the power of killing the virtue of making a cure, I hope the one may atone for the other.

Count Bel. Oh, largely, madam. Would your ladyship be as ready to apply the remedy as to give the wound? — Consider, madam, I am doubly a prisoner — first to the arms of your general, then to your more conquering eyes. My first chains are easy — there a ransom may redeem me; but from your fetters I never shall get free.

Mrs. Sul. Alas, sir! why should you complain to me of your captivity, who am in chains myself? You know, sir, that I am bound, nay, must be tied up in that particular that might give you ease: I am like you, a prisoner of war — of war, indeed! I have given my parole of honor; would you break yours to gain your liberty?

Count Bel. Most certainly I would, were I a prisoner among the Turks; dis is your case: you're a slave, madam, slave to the worst of Turks, a husband.

Mrs. Sul. There lies my foible, I confess; no fortifications, no courage, conduct, nor vigilancy can pretend to defend a place where the cruelty of the governor forces the garrison to mutiny.

Count Bel. And where de besieger is resolved to die before de place. — Here will I fix (*kneels*); — with tears, vows, and prayers assault your heart, and never rise till you surrender; or if I must storm — Love and St. Michael! — And so I begin the attack. —

Mrs. Sul. Stand off! — (*Aside.*) Sure he hears me not! — And I could almost wish he — did not! — The fellow makes love very prettily. — [*Aloud.*] But, sir, why should you put such a value upon my person, when you see it despised by one that knows it so much better?

Count Bel. He knows it not, though he possesses it; if he but knew the value of the jewel he is master of, he would always wear it next his heart, and sleep with it in his arms.

Mrs. Sul. But since he throws me unregarded from him ——

Count Bel. And one that knows your value well comes by and takes you up, is it not justice? (*Goes to lay hold of her.*)

(*Enter* Sullen *with his sword drawn.*)

Sul. Hold, villain, hold!

Mrs. Sul. (*presenting a pistol*). Do you hold!

Sul. What! murder your husband, to defend your bully!

Mrs. Sul. Bully! for shame, Mr. Sullen. Bullies wear long swords, the gentleman has none; he's a prisoner, you know. — I was aware of your outrage, and prepared this to receive your violence; and, if occasion were, to preserve myself against the force of this other gentleman.

Count Bel. O madam, your eyes be bettre firearms than your pistol; they nevre miss.

Sul. What! court my wife to my face!

Mrs. Sul. Pray, Mr. Sullen, put up; suspend your fury for a minute.

Sul. To give you time to invent an excuse!

Mrs. Sul. I need none.

Sul. No, for I heard every syllable of your discourse.

Count Bel. Ah! and begar, I tink de dialogue was vera pretty.

Mrs. Sul. Then I suppose, sir, you heard something of your own barbarity?

Sul. Barbarity! 'Oons, what does the woman call barbarity? Do I ever meddle with you?

Mrs. Sul. No.

Sul. As for you, sir, I shall take another time.

Count Bel. Ah, begar, and so must I.

Sul. Look'ee, madam, don't think that my anger proceeds from any concern I have for your honor, but for my own, and if you can contrive any way of being a whore without making me a cuckold, do it and welcome.

Mrs. Sul. Sir, I thank you kindly; you would allow me the sin but rob me of the pleasure. — No, no, I'm resolved never to venture upon the crime without the satisfaction of seeing you punished for't.

Sul. Then will you grant me this, my dear? Let anybody else do you the favor but that Frenchman, for I mortally hate his whole generation. (*Exit.*)

Count Bel. Ah, sir, that be ungrateful, for begar, I love some of yours. — Madam —— (*Approaching her.*)

Mrs. Sul. No, sir. —

Count Bel. No, sir! — Garzoon, madam, I am not your husband!

Mrs. Sul. 'Tis time to undeceive you, sir. — I believed your addresses to me were no more than an amusement, and I hope you will think the same of my complaisance; and to convince you that you ought, you must know that I brought you hither only to make you instrumental in setting me right with my husband, for he was planted to listen by my appointment.

Count Bel. By your appointment?

Mrs. Sul. Certainly.

Count Bel. And so, madam, while I was telling twenty stories to part you from your husband, begar, I was bringing you together all the while?

Mrs. Sul. I ask your pardon, sir, but I hope this will give you a taste of the virtue of the English ladies.

Count Bel. Begar, madam, your virtue be vera great, but garzoon, your honeste be vera little.

([*Re-*]*enter* Dorinda.)

Mrs. Sul. Nay, now, you're angry, sir.

Count Bel. Angry! — *Fair Dorinda* (*Sings Dorinda, the opera tune, and addresses to* Dorinda.) Madam, when your ladyship want a fool, send for me. *Fair Dorinda, Revenge, etc.* (*Exit.*)

Mrs. Sul. There goes the true humor of his nation — resentment with good manners, and the height of anger in a song! — Well, sister, you must be judge, for you have heard the trial.

Dor. And I bring in my brother guilty.

Mrs. Sul. But I must bear the punishment. — 'Tis hard, sister.

Dor. I own it; but you must have patience.

Mrs. Sul. Patience! the cant of custom — Providence sends no evil without a remedy. Should I lie groaning under a yoke I can shake off, I were accessary to my ruin, and my patience were no better than self-murder.

Dor. But how can you shake off the yoke? Your divisions don't come within the reach of the law for a divorce.

Mrs. Sul. Law! what law can search into the remote abyss of nature? what evidence can prove the unaccountable disaffections of wedlock? Can a jury sum up the endless aversions that are rooted in our souls, or can a bench give judgment upon antipathies?

Dor. They never pretended, sister; they never meddle, but in case of uncleanness.

Mrs. Sul. Uncleanness! O sister! casual violation is a transient injury, and may possibly be repaired, but can radical hatreds be ever reconciled? — No, no, sister, nature is the first lawgiver, and when she has set tempers opposite, not all the golden links of wedlock nor iron manacles of law can keep 'em fast.

Wedlock we own ordain'd by Heaven's decree,

But such as Heaven ordain'd it first to be; —
Concurring tempers in the man and wife
As mutual helps to draw the load of life.
View all the works of Providence above,
The stars with harmony and concord move;
View all the works of Providence below,
The fire, the water, earth, and air, we know,
All in one plant agree to make it grow.
Must man, the chiefest work of art divine,
Be doom'd in endless discord to repine?
No, we should injure Heaven by that surmise,
Omnipotence is just, were man but wise.

ACT IV.

Scene [I. — *The Gallery in* Lady Bountiful's *House*]

(*Enter* Mrs. Sullen.)

Mrs. Sul. Were I born an humble Turk, where women have no soul nor property, there I must sit contented. But in England, a country whose women are its glory, must women be abused? where women rule, must women be enslaved? Nay, cheated into slavery, mocked by a promise of comfortable society into a wilderness of solitude! I dare not keep the thought about me. — Oh, here comes something to divert me.

(*Enter a Countrywoman.*)

Wom. I come, an't please your ladyships — you're my Lady Bountiful, an't ye?

Mrs. Sul. Well, good woman, go on.

Wom. I have come seventeen long mail to have a cure for my husband's sore leg.

Mrs. Sul. Your husband! what, woman, cure your husband!

Wom. Ay, poor man, for his sore leg won't let him stir from home.

Mrs. Sul. There, I confess, you have given me a reason. Well, good woman, I'll tell you what you must do. You must lay your husband's leg upon a table, and with a chopping-knife you must lay it open as broad as you can; then you must take out the bone, and beat the flesh soundly with a rolling-pin; then take salt, pepper, cloves, mace, and ginger, some sweet herbs, and season it very well; then roll it up like brawn, and put it into the oven for two hours.

Wom. Heavens reward your ladyship! — I have two little babies too that are piteous bad with the graips, an't please ye.

Mrs. Sul. Put a little pepper and salt in their bellies, good woman.

(*Enter* Lady Bountiful.)

I beg your ladyship's pardon for taking your business out of your hands; I have been a-tampering here a little with one of your patients.

Lady Boun. Come, good woman, don't mind this mad creature; I am the person that you want, I suppose. — What would you have, woman?

Mrs. Sul. She wants something for her husband's sore leg.

Lady Boun. What's the matter with his leg, goody?

Wom. It come first, as one might say, with a sort of dizziness in his foot, then he had a kind of a laziness in his joints, and then his leg broke out, and then it swelled, and then it closed again, and then it broke out again, and then it festered, and then it grew better, and then it grew worse again.

Mrs. Sul. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Boun. How can you be merry with the misfortunes of other people?

Mrs. Sul. Because my own make me sad, madam.

Lady Boun. The worst reason in the world, daughter; your own misfortunes should teach you to pity others.

Mrs. Sul. But the woman's misfortunes and mine are nothing alike; her husband is sick, and mine, alas! is in health.

Lady Boun. What! would you wish your husband sick?

Mrs. Sul. Not of a sore leg, of all things.

Lady Boun. Well, good woman, go to the pantry, get your bellyful of victuals, then I'll give you a receipt of diet-drink for your husband. — But d'ye hear, goody, you must not let your husband move too much.

Wom. No, no, madam, the poor man's inclinable enough to lie still. (*Exit.*)

Lady Boun. Well, daughter Sullen, though you laugh, I have done miracles about the country here with my receipts.

Mrs. Sul. Miracles indeed, if they have cured anybody; but I believe, madam, the patient's faith goes farther toward the miracle than your prescription.

Lady Boun. Fancy helps in some cases; but there's your husband, who has as little fancy as anybody; I brought him from death's door.

Mrs. Sul. I suppose, madam, you made him drink plentifully of ass's milk.

(*Enter* Dorinda, *runs to* Mrs. Sullen.)

Dor. News, dear sister! news! news!

(*Enter* Archer, *running.*)

Arch. Where, where is my Lady Bountiful? — Pray, which is the old lady of you three?

Lady Boun. I am.

Arch. O madam, the fame of your ladyship's charity, goodness, benevolence, skill, and ability, have drawn me hither to implore your ladyship's help in behalf of my unfortunate master, who is this moment breathing his last.

Lady Boun. Your master! where is he?

Arch. At your gate, madam. Drawn by the appearance of your handsome house to view it nearer, and walking up the avenue within five paces of the court-yard, he was taken ill of a sudden with a sort of I know not what, but down he fell, and there he lies.

Lady Boun. Here, Scrub! Gipsy! all run, get my easy-chair down stairs, put the gentleman in it, and bring him in quickly, quickly!

Arch. Heaven will reward your ladyship for this charitable act.

Lady Boun. Is your master used to these fits?

Arch. O yes, madam, frequently — I have known him have five or six of a night.

Lady Boun. What's his name?

Arch. Lord, madam, he's a-dying! a minute's care or neglect may save or destroy his life!

Lady Boun. Ah, poor gentleman! — Come, friend, show me the way; I'll see him brought in myself.

(*Exit with* Archer.)

Dor. O sister, my heart flutters about strangely! I can hardly forbear running to his assistance.

Mrs. Sul. And I'll lay my life he deserves your assistance more than he wants it. Did not I tell you that my lord would find a way to come at you? Love's his distemper, and you must be the physician; put on all your charms, summon all your fire into your eyes, plant the whole artillery of your looks against his breast, and down with him.

Dor. O sister! I'm but a young gunner; I shall be afraid to shoot, for fear the piece should recoil and hurt myself.

Mrs. Sul. Never fear, you shall see me shoot before you, if you will.

Dor. No, no, dear sister; you have missed your mark so unfortunately, that I shan't care for being instructed by you.

(*Enter* Aimwell *in a chair carried by* Archer *and* Scrub, Lady Bountiful *and* Gipsy [*following*]; Aimwell *counterfeiting a swoon.*)

Lady Boun. Here, here, let's see the hartshorn drops. — Gipsy, a glass of fair water! His fit's very strong. — Bless me, how his hands are clinched!

Arch. For shame, ladies, what d'ye do? why don't you help us? — (*To* Dorinda.) Pray, madam, take his hand and open it, if you can, whilst I hold his head.

(Dorinda *takes his hand.*)

Dor. Poor gentleman! — Oh! — he has got my hand within his, and squeezes it unmercifully ——

Lady Boun. 'Tis the violence of his convulsion, child.

Arch. Oh, madam, he's perfectly possessed in these cases — he'll bite if you don't have a care.

Dor. Oh, my hand! my hand!

Lady Boun. What's the matter with the

foolish girl? I have got his hand open, you see, with a great deal of ease.

Arch. Ay, but, madam, your daughter's hand is somewhat warmer than your ladyship's, and the heat of it draws the force of the spirits that way.

Mrs. Sul. I find, friend, you're very learned in these sorts of fits.

Arch. 'Tis no wonder, madam, for I'm often troubled with them myself; I find myself extremely ill at this minute.

(*Looking hard at* Mrs. Sullen.)

Mrs. Sul. (*aside*). I fancy I could find a way to cure you.

Lady Boun. His fit holds him very long.

Arch. Longer than usual, madam. — Pray, young lady, open his breast, and give him air.

Lady Boun. Where did his illness take him first, pray?

Arch. To-day at church, madam.

Lady Boun. In what manner was he taken?

Arch. Very strangely, my lady. He was of a sudden touched with something in his eyes, which, at the first, he only felt, but could not tell whether 'twas pain or pleasure.

Lady Boun. Wind, nothing but wind!

Arch. By soft degrees it grew and mounted to his brain, — there his fancy caught it; there formed it so beautiful, and dressed it up in such gay, pleasing colors, that his transported appetite seized the fair idea, and straight conveyed it to his heart. That hospitable seat of life sent all its sanguine spirits forth to meet, and opened all its sluicy gates to take the stranger in.

Lady Boun. Your master should never go without a bottle to smell to. — Oh — he recovers! The lavender-water — some feathers to burn under his nose — Hungary-water to rub his temples. — Oh, he comes to himself! — Hem a little, sir, hem. — Gipsy! bring the cordial-water.

(Aimwell *seems to awake in amaze.*)

Dor. How d'ye, sir?

Aim. Where am I? (*Rising.*)

Sure I have pass'd the gulf of silent death,
And now I land on the Elysian shore! —
Behold the goddess of those happy plains,
Fair Proserpine — let me adore thy bright divinity.

(*Kneels to* Dorinda, *and kisses her hand.*)

Mrs. Sul. So, so, so! I knew where the fit would end!

Aim. Eurydice perhaps —

How could thy Orpheus keep his word,
And not look back upon thee?
No treasure but thyself could sure have bribed him
To look one minute off thee.

Lady Boun. Delirious, poor gentleman!

Arch. Very delirious, madam, very delirious.

Aim. Martin's voice, I think.

Arch. Yes, my lord. — How does your lordship?

Lady Boun. Lord! did you mind that, girls?

Aim. Where am I?

Arch. In very good hands, sir. — You were taken just now with one of your old fits, under the trees, just by this good lady's house; her ladyship had you taken in, and has miraculously brought you to yourself, as you see.

Aim. I am so confounded with shame, madam, that I can now only beg pardon — and refer my acknowledgments for your ladyship's care till an opportunity offers of making some amends. — I dare be no longer troublesome. — Martin! give two guineas to the servants. (*Going.*)

Dor. Sir, you may catch cold by going so soon into the air; you don't look, sir, as if you were perfectly recovered.

(*Here* Archer *talks to* Lady Bountiful *in dumb show.*)

Aim. That I shall never be, madam; my present illness is so rooted that I must expect to carry it to my grave.

Mrs. Sul. Don't despair, sir; I have known several in your distemper shake it off with a fortnight's physic.

Lady Boun. Come, sir, your servant has been telling me that you're apt to relapse if you go into the air. — Your good manners shan't get the better of ours — you shall sit down again, sir. — Come, sir, we don't mind ceremonies in the country — here, sir, my service t'ye. — You shall taste my water; 'tis a cordial I can assure you, and of my own making — drink it off, sir. — (Aimwell *drinks.*) And how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

Aim. Somewhat better — though very faint still.

Lady Boun. Ay, ay, people are always faint after these fits. — Come, girls, you shall show the gentleman the house. — 'Tis but an old family building, sir; but you had better walk about and cool by degrees, than venture immediately into the air. — You'll find some tolerable pictures. — Dorinda, show the gentleman the way. I must go to the poor woman below.

(*Exit.*)

Dor. This way, sir.

Aim. Ladies, shall I beg leave for my servant to wait on you, for he understands pictures very well?

Mrs. Sul. Sir, we understand originals as well as he does pictures, so he may come along.

(*Exeunt* Dorinda, Mrs. Sullen, Aimwell, Archer. Aimwell *leads* Dorinda.)

(*Enter* Foigard *and* Scrub, *meeting.*)

Foi. Save you, Master Scrub!

Scrub. Sir, I won't be saved your way — I hate a priest, I abhor the French, and I defy the devil. — Sir, I'm a bold Briton, and will spill the last drop of my blood to keep out popery and slavery.

Foi. Master Scrub, you would put me down in politics, and so I would be speaking with Mrs. Shipsy.

Scrub. Good Mr. Priest, you can't speak with her; she's sick, sir, she's gone abroad, sir, she's — dead two months ago, sir.

([*Re-*]*enter* Gipsy.)

Gip. How now, impudence! how dare you talk so saucily to the doctor? — Pray, sir, don't take it ill; for the common people of England are not so civil to strangers, as ——

Scrub. You lie! you lie! — 'Tis the common people that are civilest to strangers.

Gip. Sirrah, I have a good mind to — get you out, I say!

Scrub. I won't.

Gip. You won't, sauce-box! — Pray, doctor, what is the captain's name that came to your inn last night?

Scrub. [*aside*]. The captain! Ah, the devil, there she hampers me again; — the captain has me on one side, and the priest on t'other: — so between the gown and the sword, I have a fine time on't. — But, *Cedunt arma togæ.*

(*Going.*)

Gip. What, sirrah, won't you march?

Scrub. No, my dear, I won't march — but I'll walk. — [*Aside.*] And I'll make bold to listen a little too.

(*Goes behind the side-scene and listens.*)

Gip. Indeed, doctor, the Count has been barbarously treated, that's the truth on't.

Foi. Ah, Mrs. Gipsy, upon my shoul, now, gra, his complainings would mollify the marrow in your bones, and move the bowels of your commiseration! He veeps, and he dances, and he fistles, and he swears, and he laughs, and he stamps, and he sings: in conclusion, joy, he's afflicted *à la française*, and a stranger would not know whider to cry or to laugh with him.

Gip. What would you have me do, doctor?

Foi. Noting, joy, but only hide the Count in Mrs. Sullen's closet when it is dark.

Gip. Nothing! is that nothing? It would be both a sin and a shame, doctor.

Foi. Here is twenty louis d'ors, joy, for your shame; and I will give you an absolution for the shin.

Gip. But won't that money look like a bribe?

Foi. Dat is according as you shall tauk it. — If you receive the money beforehand, 'twill be *logicè*, a bribe; but if you stay till afterwards, 'twill be only a gratification.

Gip. Well, doctor, I'll take it *logicè*. — But what must I do with my conscience, sir?

Foi. Leave dat wid me, joy; I am

your priest, gra; and your conscience is under my hands.

Gip. But should I put the Count into the closet ——

Foi. Vel, is dere any shin for a man's being in a closhet? One may go to prayers in a closhet.

Gip. But if the lady should come into her chamber, and go to bed?

Foi. Vel, and is dere any shin in going to bed, joy?

Gip. Ay, but if the parties should meet, doctor?

Foi. Vel den — the parties must be responsible. — Do you be gone after putting the Count into the closhet; and leave the shins wid themselves. — I will come with the Count to instruct you in your chamber.

Gip. Well, doctor, your religion is so pure! — Methinks I'm so easy after an absolution, and can sin afresh with so much security, that I'm resolved to die a martyr to't. — Here's the key of the garden door, come in the back way when 'tis late, I'll be ready to receive you; but don't so much as whisper, only take hold of my hand; I'll lead you, and do you lead the Count, and follow me. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter* Scrub.)

Scrub. What witchcraft now have these two imps of the devil been a-hatching here? — There's twenty louis-d'ors; I heard that, and saw the purse. — But I must give room to my betters. [*Exit.*]

([*Re-*]*enter* Aimwell, *leading* Dorinda, *and making love in dumb show;* Mrs. Sullen *and* Archer.)

Mrs. Sul. (*to* Archer). Pray, sir, how d'ye like that piece?

Arch. Oh, 'tis Leda! You find, madam, how Jupiter comes disguised to make love ——

Mrs. Sul. But what think you there of Alexander's battles?

Arch. We only want a Le Brun, madam, to draw greater battles, and a greater general of our own. — The Danube, madam, would make a greater figure in a picture than the Granicus; and we have our Ramillies to match their Arbela.

Mrs. Sul. Pray, sir, what head is that in the corner there?

Arch. O madam, 'tis poor Ovid in his exile.

Mrs. Sul. What was he banished for?

Arch. His ambitious love, madam. — (*Bowing.*) His misfortune touches me.

Mrs. Sul. Was he successful in his amours?

Arch. There he has left us in the dark. — He was too much a gentleman to tell.

Mrs. Sul. If he were secret, I pity him.

Arch. And if he were successful, I envy him.

Mrs. Sul. How d'ye like that Venus over the chimney?

Arch. Venus! I protest, madam, I took it for your picture; but now I look again, 'tis not handsome enough.

Mrs. Sul. Oh, what a charm is flattery! If you would see my picture, there it is, over that cabinet. — How d'ye like it?

Arch. I must admire anything, madam, that has the least resemblance of you. — But, methinks, madam — (*He looks at the picture and* Mrs. Sullen *three or four times, by turns.*) Pray, madam, who drew it?

Mrs. Sul. A famous hand, sir.

(*Here* Aimwell *and* Dorinda *go off.*)

Arch. A famous hand, madam! — Your eyes, indeed, are featured there; but where's the sparking moisture, shining fluid, in which they swim? The picture, indeed, has your dimples; but where's the swarm of killing Cupids that should ambush there? The lips too are figured out; but where's the carnation dew, the pouting ripeness, that tempts the taste in the original?

Mrs. Sul. [*aside*]. Had it been my lot to have matched with such a man!

Arch. Your breasts too — presumptuous man! — what, paint Heaven! — Apropos, madam, in the very next picture is Salmoneus, that was struck dead with lightning, for offering to imitate Jove's thunder; I hope you served the painter so, madam?

Mrs. Sul. Had my eyes the power of

thunder, they should employ their lightning better.

Arch. There's the finest bed in that room, madam! I suppose 'tis your ladyship's bedchamber.

Mrs. Sul. And what then, sir?

Arch. I think the quilt is the richest that ever I saw. — I can't at this distance, madam, distinguish the figures of the embroidery; will you give me leave, madam? — [*Goes into the chamber.*]

Mrs. Sul. The devil take his impudence! — Sure, if I gave him an opportunity, he durst not offer it? — I have a great mind to try. — (*Going; returns.*) 'Sdeath, what am I doing? — And alone, too! — Sister! sister! (*Runs out.*)

Arch. [*coming out*]. I'll follow her close —

For where a Frenchman durst attempt
to storm,
A Briton sure may well the work per-
form. (*Going.*)

([*Re-*]*enter* Scrub.)

Scrub. Martin! brother Martin!

Arch. O brother Scrub, I beg your pardon, I was not a-going; here's a guinea my master ordered you.

Scrub. A guinea! hi, hi, hi! a guinea! eh — by this light it is a guinea! But I suppose you expect one and twenty shillings in change?

Arch. Not at all; I have another for Gipsy.

Scrub. A guinea for her! Faggot and fire for the witch! — Sir, give me that guinea, and I'll discover a plot.

Arch. A plot!

Scrub. Ay, sir, a plot, and a horrid plot! — First, it must be a plot, because there's a woman in't; secondly, it must be a plot, because there's a priest in't; thirdly, it must be a plot, because there's French gold in't; and fourthly, it must be a plot, because I don't know what to make on't.

Arch. Nor anybody else, I'm afraid, brother Scrub.

Scrub. Truly, I'm afraid so too; for where there's a priest and a woman, there's always a mystery and a riddle. — This I know, that here has been the doctor with a temptation in one hand and an absolution in the other; and Gipsy has sold herself to the devil; I saw the price paid down, my eyes shall take their oath on't.

Arch. And is all this bustle about Gipsy?

Scrub. That's not all; I could hear but a word here and there; but I remember they mentioned a Count, a closet, a back door, and a key.

Arch. The Count! — Did you hear nothing of Mrs. Sullen?

Scrub. I did hear some word that sounded that way; but whether it was Sullen or Dorinda, I could not distinguish.

Arch. You have told this matter to nobody, brother?

Scrub. Told! No, sir, I thank you for that; I'm resolved never to speak one word *pro* nor *con*, till we have a peace.

Arch. You're i' the right, brother Scrub. Here's a treaty afoot between the Count and the lady: the priest and the chambermaid are the plenipotentiaries. — It shall go hard but I find a way to be included in the treaty. — Where's the doctor now?

Scrub. He and Gipsy are this moment devouring my lady's marmalade in the closet.

Aim. (*from without*). Martin! Martin!

Arch. I come, sir, I come.

Scrub. But you forget the other guinea, brother Martin.

Arch. Here, I give it with all my heart.

Scrub. And I take it with all my soul. — [*Exit* Archer.] Ecod, I'll spoil your plotting, Mrs. Gipsy! and if you should set the captain upon me, these two guineas will buy me off. [*Exit.*]

([*Re-*]*enter* Mrs. Sullen *and* Dorinda, *meeting.*)

Mrs. Sul. Well, sister!

Dor. And well, sister!

Mrs. Sul. What's become of my lord?

Dor. What's become of his servant?

Mrs. Sul. Servant! he's a prettier fellow, and a finer gentleman by fifty degrees than his master.

Dor. O' my conscience, I fancy you could beg that fellow at the gallows-foot!

Mrs. Sul. O' my conscience I could, provided I could put a friend of yours in his room.

Dor. You desired me, sister, to leave you, when you transgressed the bounds of honor.

Mrs. Sul. Thou dear censorious country girl! what dost mean? You can't think of the man without the bedfellow, I find.

Dor. I don't find anything unnatural in that thought. While the mind is conversant with flesh and blood, it must conform to the humors of the company.

Mrs. Sul. How a little love and good company improves a woman! Why, child, you begin to live — you never spoke before.

Dor. Because I was never spoke to. — My lord has told me that I have more wit and beauty than any of my sex; and truly I begin to think the man is sincere.

Mrs. Sul. You're in the right, Dorinda; pride is the life of a woman, and flattery is our daily bread; and she's a fool that won't believe a man there, as much as she that believes him in anything else. — But I'll lay you a guinea that I had finer things said to me than you had.

Dor. Done! — What did your fellow say to ye?

Mrs. Sul. My fellow took the picture of Venus for mine.

Dor. But my lover took me for Venus herself.

Mrs. Sul. Common cant! Had my spark called me a Venus directly, I should have believed him a footman in good earnest.

Dor. But my lover was upon his knees to me.

Mrs. Sul. And mine was upon his tiptoes to me.

Dor. Mine vowed to die for me.

Mrs. Sul. Mine swore to die with me.

Dor. Mine spoke the softest moving things.

Mrs. Sul. Mine had his moving things too.

Dor. Mine kissed my hand ten thousand times.

Mrs. Sul. Mine has all that pleasure to come.

Dor. Mine offered marriage.

Mrs. Sul. O Lard! D'ye call that a moving thing?

Dor. The sharpest arrow in his quiver, my dear sister! — Why, my ten thousand pounds may lie brooding here this seven years, and hatch nothing at last but some ill-natured clown like yours. Whereas, if I marry my Lord Aimwell, there will be title, place, and precedence, the Park, the play, and the drawing-room, splendor, equipage, noise, and flambeaux. — *Hey, my Lady Aimwell's servants there! — Lights, lights to the stairs! — My Lady Aimwell's coach put forward! — Stand by, make room for her ladyship!* — Are not these things moving? — What! melancholy of a sudden?

Mrs. Sul. Happy, happy sister! your angel has been watchful for your happiness, whilst mine has slept regardless of his charge. — Long smiling years of circling joys for you, but not one hour for me! (*Weeps.*)

Dor. Come, my dear, we'll talk of something else.

Mrs. Sul. O Dorinda! I own myself a woman, full of my sex, a gentle, generous soul, easy and yielding to soft desires; a spacious heart, where his love and all his train might lodge. And must the fair apartment of my breast be made a stable for a brute to lie in?

Dor. Meaning your husband, I suppose?

Mrs. Sul. Husband! no, — even husband is too soft a name for him. — But, come, I expect my brother here to-night or to-morrow; he was abroad when my father married me; perhaps he'll find a way to make me easy.

Dor. Will you promise not to make yourself easy in the meantime with my lord's friend?

Mrs. Sul. You mistake me, sister. It happens with us as among the men, the greatest talkers are the greatest cowards; and there's a reason for it; those spirits evaporate in prattle, which might do more mischief if they took another course. — Though, to confess the truth, I do love that fellow; — and if I met him dressed as he should be, and I undressed as I should be — look ye, sister, I have no supernatural gifts — I can't swear I could resist the temptation; though I can safely promise to avoid it; and that's as much as the best of us can do.

(*Exeunt* Mrs. Sullen *and* Dorinda.)

Scene [II. — *A Room in* Boniface's *Inn*.]

(*Enter* Aimwell *and* Archer, *laughing*.)

Arch. And the awkward kindness of the good motherly old gentlewoman ——

Aim. And the coming easiness of the young one — 'Sdeath, 'tis pity to deceive her!

Arch. Nay, if you adhere to these principles, stop where you are.

Aim. I can't stop; for I love her to distraction.

Arch. 'Sdeath, if you love her a hair's breadth beyond discretion, you must go no farther.

Aim. Well, well, anything to deliver us from sauntering away our idle evenings at White's, Tom's, or Will's, and be stinted to bear looking at our old acquaintance, the cards, because our impotent pockets can't afford us a guinea for the mercenary drabs.

Arch. Or be obliged to some purse-proud coxcomb for a scandalous bottle, where we must not pretend to our share of the discourse, because we can't pay our club o' th' reckoning. — Damn it, I had rather sponge upon Morris, and sup upon a dish of bohea scored behind the door!

Aim. And there expose our want of sense by talking criticisms, as we should our want of money by railing at the government.

Arch. Or be obliged to sneak into the side-box, and between both houses steal two acts of a play, and because we han't money to see the other three, we come away discontented, and damn the whole five.

Aim. And ten thousand such rascally tricks — had we outlived our fortunes among our acquaintance. — But now ——

Arch. Ay, now is the time to prevent all this. — Strike while the iron is hot. — This priest is the luckiest part of our adventure; he shall marry you, and pimp for me.

Aim. But I should not like a woman that can be so fond of a Frenchman.

Arch. Alas, sir! Necessity has no law. The lady may be in distress; perhaps she has a confounded husband, and her revenge may carry her farther than her love. — Egad, I have so good an opinion of her, and of myself, that I begin to fancy strange things; and we must say this for the honor of our women, and indeed of ourselves, that they do stick to their men as they do to their *Magna Charta*. If the plot lies as I suspect, I must put on the gentleman. — But here comes the doctor. — I shall be ready. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* Foigard.)

Foi. Sauve you, noble friend.

Aim. O sir, your servant! Pray, doctor, may I crave your name?

Foi. Fat naam is upon me? My naam is Foigard, joy.

Aim. Foigard! a very good name for a clergyman. Pray, Doctor Foigard, were you ever in Ireland?

Foi. Ireland! no, joy. Fat sort of plaace is dat saam Ireland? Dey say de people are catched dere when dey are young.

Aim. And some of 'em when they are old — as for example. — (*Takes* Foigard *by the shoulder.*) Sir, I arrest you as a traitor against the government; you're a subject of England, and this morning showed me a commission, by which you served as chaplain in the French army. This is death by our law, and your reverence must hang for't.

Foi. Upon my shoul, noble friend, dis is strange news you tell me! Fader Foigard a subject of England! de son of a burgomaster of Brussels, a subject of England! ubooboo ——

AIM. The son of a bog-trotter in Ireland! Sir, your tongue will condemn you before any bench in the kingdom.

FOI. And is my tongue all your evidensh, joy?

AIM. That's enough.

FOI. No, no, joy, for I vill never spake English no more.

AIM. Sir, I have other evidence. — Here, Martin!

([*Re-*]*enter* ARCHER.)

You know this fellow?

ARCH. (*in a brogue*). Saave you, my dear cussen, how does your health?

FOI. (*aside*). Ah! upon my shoul dere is my countryman, and his brogue will hang mine. — [*To* ARCHER.] *Mynheer, Ick wet neat watt hey zacht, Ick universton ewe neat, sacramant!*

AIM. Altering your language won't do, sir; this fellow knows your person, and will swear to your face.

FOI. Faace! fey, is dear a brogue upon my faash too?

ARCH. Upon my soulvation dere ish, joy! — But cussen Mackshane, vil you not put a remembrance upon me?

FOI. (*aside*). Mackshane! by St. Paatrick, dat ish [my] naame, shure enough!

AIM. [*aside to* ARCHER]. I fancy, Archer, you have it.

FOI. The devil hang you, joy! By fat acquaintance are you my cussen?

ARCH. Oh, de devil hang yourshelf, joy! You know we were little boys togeder upon de school, and your foster-moder's son was married upon my nurse's chister, joy, and so we are Irish cussens.

FOI. De devil taak de relation! Vel, joy, and fat school was it?

ARCH. I tinks it vas — aay — 'twas Tipperary.

FOI. No, no, joy; it vas Kilkenny.

AIM. That's enough for us — self-confession. — Come, sir, we must deliver you into the hands of the next magistrate.

ARCH. He sends you to jail, you're tried next assizes, and away you go swing into purgatory.

FOI. And is it so wid you, cussen?

ARCH. It vil be sho wid you, cussen, if you don't immediately confess the secret between you and Mrs. Gipsy. —Look'ee, sir, the gallows or the secret, take your choice.

FOI. The gallows! Upon my shoul I hate that saam gallow, for it is a diseash dat is fatal to our family. — Vel, den, dere is nothing, shentlemens, but Mrs. Shullen would spaak wid the Count in her chamber at midnight, and dere is no harm, joy, for I am to conduct the Count to the plash, myshelf.

ARCH. As I guessed. — Have you communicated the matter to the Count?

FOI. I have not sheen him since.

ARCH. Right again! Why then, doctor — you shall conduct me to the lady instead of the Count.

FOI. Fat, my cussen to the lady! Upon my shoul, gra, dat is too much upon the brogue.

ARCH. Come, come, doctor; consider we have got a rope about your neck, and if you offer to squeak, we'll stop your windpipe, most certainly. We shall have another job for you in a day or two, I hope.

AIM. Here's company coming this way; let's into my chamber, and there concert our affairs farther.

ARCH. Come, my dear cussen, come along. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter* BONIFACE, HOUNSLOW, *and* BAGSHOT *at one door*, GIBBET *at the opposite.*)

GIB. Well, gentlemen, 'tis a fine night for our enterprise.

HOUN. Dark as hell.

BAG. And blows like the devil; our landlord here has showed us the window where we must break in, and tells us the plate stands in the wainscot cupboard in the parlor.

BON. Ay, ay, Mr. Bagshot, as the saying is, knives and forks, and cups and cans, and tumblers and tankards. There's one tankard, as the saying is, that's near upon as big as me; it was a present to the squire from his godmother, and smells of nutmeg and toast like an East India ship.

Houn. Then you say we must divide at the stair-head?

Bon. Yes, Mr. Hounslow, as the saying is. — At one end of that gallery lies my Lady Bountiful and her daughter, and at the other Mrs. Sullen. — As for the squire ——

Gib. He's safe enough, I have fairly entered him, and he's more than half seas over already. But such a parcel of scoundrels are got about him now, that, egad, I was ashamed to be seen in their company.

Bon. 'Tis now twelve, as the saying is — Gentlemen, you must set out at one.

Gib. Hounslow, do you and Bagshot see our arms fixed, and I'll come to you presently.

Houn., Bag. We will.

(*Exeunt.*)

Gib. Well, my dear Bonny, you assure me that Scrub is a coward?

Bon. A chicken, as the saying is. — You'll have no creature to deal with but the ladies.

Gib. And I can assure you, friend, there's a great deal of address and good manners in robbing a lady; I am the most a gentleman that way that ever travelled the road. — But, my dear Bonny, this prize will be a galleon, a Vigo business. — I warrant you we shall bring off three or four thousand pound.

Bon. In plate, jewels, and money, as the saying is, you may.

Gib. Why then, Tyburn, I defy thee! I'll get up to town, sell off my horse and arms, buy myself some pretty employment in the household, and be as snug and as honest as any courtier of 'um all.

Bon. And what think you then of my daughter Cherry for a wife?

Gib. Look'ee, my dear Bonny — Cherry *is the Goddess I adore*, as the song goes; but it is a maxim that man and wife should never have it in their power to hang one another; for if they should, the Lord have mercy on 'um both!

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT V.

Scene [I. — *A Room in* Boniface's *Inn.*]

(*Knocking without, enter* Boniface.)

Bon. Coming! Coming! — A coach and six foaming horses at this time o' night! Some great man, as the saying is, for he scorns to travel with other people.

(*Enter* Sir Charles Freeman.)

Sir Chas. What, fellow! a public house, and abed when other people sleep?

Bon. Sir, I an't abed, as the saying is.

Sir Chas. Is Mr. Sullen's family abed, think'ee?

Bon. All but the squire himself, sir, as the saying is; he's in the house.

Sir Chas. What company has he?

Bon. Why, sir, there's the constable, Mr. Gage the exciseman, the hunchbacked barber, and two or three other gentlemen.

Sir Chas. [*aside*]. I find my sister's letters gave me the true picture of her spouse.

(*Enter* Sullen, *drunk.*)

Bon. Sir, here's the squire.

Sul. The puppies left me asleep. — Sir!

Sir Chas. Well, sir.

Sul. Sir, I'm an unfortunate man — I have three thousand pound a year, and I can't get a man to drink a cup of ale with me.

Sir Chas. That's very hard.

Sul. Ay, sir; and unless you have pity upon me, and smoke one pipe with me, I must e'en go home to my wife, and I had rather go the devil by half.

Sir Chas. But I presume, sir, you won't see your wife to-night; she'll be gone to bed. You don't use to lie with your wife in that pickle?

Sul. What! not lie with my wife! Why, sir, do you take me for an atheist or a rake?

Sir Chas. If you hate her, sir, I think you had better lie from her.

Sul. I think so too, friend. — But I'm a justice of peace, and must do nothing against the law.

Sir Chas. Law! As I take it, Mr. Justice, nobody observes law for law's sake, only for the good of those for whom it was made.

Sul. But if the law orders me to send you to jail, you must lie there, my friend.

Sir Chas. Not unless I commit a crime to deserve it.

Sul. A crime? 'Oons, an't I married?

Sir Chas. Nay, sir, if you call marriage a crime, you must disown it for a law.

Sul. Eh! — I must be acquainted with you, sir. — But, sir, I should be very glad to know the truth of this matter.

Sir Chas. Truth, sir, is a profound sea, and few there be that dare wade deep enough to find out the bottom on't. Besides, sir, I'm afraid the line of your understanding mayn't be long enough.

Sul. Look'ee, sir, I have nothing to say to your sea of truth, but if a good parcel of land can entitle a man to a little truth, I have as much as any he in the country.

Bon. I never heard your worship, as the saying is, talk so much before.

Sul. Because I never met with a man that I liked before. —

Bon. Pray, sir, as the saying is, let me ask you one question: are not man and wife one flesh?

Sir Chas. You and your wife, Mr. Guts, may be one flesh, because ye are nothing else; — but rational creatures have minds that must be united.

Sul. Minds!

Sir Chas. Ay, minds, sir; don't you think that the mind takes place of the body?

Sul. In some people.

Sir Chas. Then the interest of the master must be consulted before that of his servant.

Sul. Sir, you shall dine with me tomorrow! — 'Oons, I always thought that we were naturally one.

Sir Chas. Sir, I know that my two hands are naturally one, because they love one another, kiss one another, help one another in all the actions of life; but I could not say so much if they were always at cuffs.

Sul. Then 'tis plain that we are two.

Sir Chas. Why don't you part with her, sir?

Sul. Will you take her, sir?

Sir Chas. With all my heart.

Sul. You shall have her to-morrow morning, and a venison-pasty into the bargain.

Sir Chas. You'll let me have her fortune too?

Sul. Fortune! Why, sir, I have no quarrel at her fortune. I only hate the woman, sir, and none but the woman shall go.

Sir Chas. But her fortune, sir ——

Sul. Can you play at whisk, sir?

Sir Chas. No, truly, sir.

Sul. Nor at all-fours?

Sir. Chas. Neither!

Sul. (*aside*). 'Oons! where was this man bred? — [*Aloud.*] Burn me, sir! I can't go home; 'tis but two o'clock.

Sir Chas. For half an hour, sir, if you please. But you must consider 'tis late.

Sul. Late! that's the reason I can't go to bed. — Come, sir! (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter* Cherry, *runs across the stage and knocks at* Aimwell's *chamber door. Enter* Aimwell *in his nightcap and gown.*)

Aim. What's the matter? You tremble, child; you're frighted.

Cher. No wonder, sir. — But, in short, sir, this very minute a gang of rogues are gone to rob my Lady Bountiful's house.

Aim. How!

Cher. I dogged 'em to the very door, and left 'em breaking in.

Aim. Have you alarmed anybody else with the news?

Cher. No, no, sir, I wanted to have discovered the whole plot, and twenty other things, to your man Martin; but I have searched the whole house, and can't find him. Where is he?

Aim. No matter, child; will you guide me immediately to the house?

Cher. With all my heart, sir; my Lady Bountiful is my godmother, and I love Mrs. Dorinda so well ——

Aim. Dorinda! The name inspires me, the glory and the danger shall be all my own. — Come, my life, let me but get my sword. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene [II.] — *A Bedchamber in* Lady Bountiful's *House*

(*Enter* Mrs. Sullen [*and*] Dorinda *undressed; a table and lights.*)

Dor. 'Tis very late, sister. No news of your spouse yet?

Mrs. Sul. No, I'm condemned to be alone till towards four, and then perhaps I may be executed with his company.

Dor. Well, my dear, I'll leave you to your rest; you'll go directly to bed, I suppose?

Mrs. Sul. I don't know what to do. — Heigh-ho!

Dor. That's a desiring sigh, sister.

Mrs. Sul. This is a languishing hour, sister.

Dor. And might prove a critical minute, if the pretty fellow were here.

Mrs. Sul. Here! What, in my bedchamber at two o'clock o' th' morning, I undressed, the family asleep, my hated husband abroad, and my lovely fellow at my feet! — O 'gad, sister!

Dor. Thoughts are free, sister, and them I allow you. — So, my dear, good night.

Mrs. Sul. A good rest to my dear Dorinda! — [*Exit* Dorinda.] Thoughts free! are they so? Why, then suppose him here, dressed like a youthful, gay, and burning bridegroom, (*Here* Archer *steals out of the closet.*) with tongue enchanting, eyes bewitching, knees imploring. — (*Turns a little o' one side and sees* Archer *in the posture she describes.*) — Ah! — (*Shrieks, and runs to the other side of the stage.*) Have my thoughts raised a spirit? — What are you, sir, a man or a devil?

Arch. A man, a man, madam. (*Rising.*)

Mrs. Sul. How shall I be sure of it?

Arch. Madam, I'll give you demonstration this minute. (*Takes her hand.*)

Mrs. Sul. What, sir! do you intend to be rude?

Arch. Yes, madam, if you please.

Mrs. Sul. In the name of wonder, whence came ye?

Arch. From the skies, madam — I'm a Jupiter in love, and you shall be my Alcmena.

Mrs. Sul. How came you in?

Arch. I flew in at the window, madam; your cousin Cupid lent me his wings, and your sister Venus opened the casement.

Mrs. Sul. I'm struck dumb with admiration!

Arch. And I — with wonder! (*Looks passionately at her.*)

Mrs. Sul. What will become of me?

Arch. How beautiful she looks! — The teeming, jolly Spring smiles in her blooming face, and when she was conceived, her mother smelt to roses, looked on lilies —

Lilies unfold their white, their fragrant charms,
When the warm sun thus darts into their arms.

(*Runs to her.*)

Mrs. Sul. Ah! (*Shrieks.*)

Arch. 'Oons, madam, what d'ye mean? you'll raise the house.

Mrs. Sul. Sir, I'll wake the dead before I bear this! — What! approach me with the freedoms of a keeper! I'm glad on't, your impudence has cured me.

Arch. If this be impudence, — (*Kneels.*) I leave to your partial self; no panting pilgrim, after a tedious, painful voyage, e'er bowed before his saint with more devotion.

Mrs. Sul. (*aside*). Now, now, I'm ruined if he kneels! — [*Aloud.*] Rise, thou prostrate engineer, not all thy undermining skill shall reach my heart. — Rise, and know I am a woman without my sex; I can love to all the tenderness of wishes, sighs, and tears — but go no farther. — Still, to convince you that I'm more than woman, I can speak my frailty, confess my weakness even for you — but ——

Arch. For me! (*Going to lay hold on her.*)

Mrs. Sul. Hold, sir! build not upon that; for my most mortal hatred follows if you disobey what I command you now. —

Leave me this minute. — (*Aside.*) If he denies, I'm lost.

ARCH. Then you'll promise ——

MRS. SUL. Anything another time.

ARCH. When shall I come?

MRS. SUL. To-morrow — when you will.

ARCH. Your lips must seal the promise.

MRS. SUL. Pshaw!

ARCH. They must! they must! — (*Kisses her.*) Raptures and paradise! — And why not now, my angel? the time, the place, silence, and secrecy, all conspire. — And the now conscious stars have preordained this moment for my happiness.

(*Takes her in his arms.*)

MRS. SUL. You will not! cannot, sure!

ARCH. If the sun rides fast, and disappoints not mortals of to-morrow's dawn, this night shall crown my joys.

MRS. SUL. My sex's pride assist me!

ARCH. My sex's strength help me!

MRS. SUL. You shall kill me first!

ARCH. I'll die with you.

(*Carrying her off.*)

MRS. SUL. Thieves! thieves! murder! —

(*Enter* SCRUB *in his breeches, and one shoe.*)

SCRUB. Thieves! thieves! murder! popery!

ARCH. Ha! the very timorous stag will kill in rutting time.

(*Draws, and offers to stab* SCRUB.)

SCRUB (*kneeling*). O pray, sir, spare all I have, and take my life!

MRS. SUL. (*holding* ARCHER'S *hand*). What does the fellow mean?

SCRUB. O madam, down upon your knees, your marrow-bones! — He's one of 'um.

ARCH. Of whom?

SCRUB. One of the rogues — I beg your pardon, sir, one of the honest gentlemen that just now are broke into the house.

ARCH. How!

MRS. SUL. I hope you did not come to rob me?

ARCH. Indeed I did, madam, but I would have taken nothing but what you might ha' spared; but your crying "Thieves" has waked this dreaming fool, and so he takes 'em for granted.

SCRUB. Granted! 'tis granted, sir; take all we have.

MRS. SUL. The fellow looks as if he were broke out of Bedlam.

SCRUB. 'Oons, madam, they're broke into the house with fire and sword! I saw them, heard them; they'll be here this minute.

ARCH. What, thieves?

SCRUB. Under favor, sir, I think so.

MRS. SUL. What shall we do, sir?

ARCH. Madam, I wish your ladyship a good night.

MRS. SUL. Will you leave me?

ARCH. Leave you! Lord, madam, did not you command me to be gone just now, upon pain of your immortal hatred?

MRS. SUL. Nay, but pray, sir ——

(*Takes hold of him.*)

ARCH. Ha, ha, ha! now comes my turn to be ravished. — You see now, madam, you must use men one way or other; but take this by the way, good madam, that none but a fool will give you the benefit of his courage, unless you'll take his love along with it. — How are they armed, friend?

SCRUB. With sword and pistol, sir.

ARCH. Hush! — I see a dark lantern coming through the gallery. — Madam, be assured I will protect you, or lose my life.

MRS. SUL. Your life! No, sir, they can rob me of nothing that I value half so much; therefore, now, sir, let me entreat you to be gone.

ARCH. No, madam, I'll consult my own safety for the sake of yours; I'll work by stratagem. Have you courage enough to stand the appearance of 'em?

MRS. SUL. Yes, yes, since I have 'scaped your hands, I can face anything.

ARCH. Come hither, brother Scrub! don't you know me?

SCRUB. Eh! my dear brother, let me kiss thee.

(*Kisses* ARCHER.)

ARCH. This way — here ——

(ARCHER *and* SCRUB *hide behind the bed.*)

(*Enter* GIBBET, *with a dark lantern in one hand, and a pistol in the other.*)

GIB. Ay, ay, this is the chamber, and the lady alone.

MRS. SUL. Who are you, sir? what would you have? d'ye come to rob me?

GIB. Rob you! Alack a day, madam, I'm only a younger brother, madam; and so, madam, if you make a noise, I'll shoot you through the head; but don't be afraid, madam. — (*Laying his lantern and pistol upon the table.*) These rings, madam — don't be concerned, madam, I have a profound respect for you, madam; your keys, madam — don't be frighted, madam, I'm the most of a gentleman. — (*Searching her pockets.*) This necklace, madam — I never was rude to any lady; — I have a veneration — for this necklace ——

(*Here* ARCHER, *having come round and seized the pistol, takes* GIBBET *by the collar, trips up his heels, and claps the pistol to his breast.*)

ARCH. Hold, profane villain, and take the reward of thy sacrilege!

GIB. Oh! pray, sir, don't kill me; I an't prepared.

ARCH. How many is there of 'em, Scrub?

SCRUB. Five-and-forty, sir.

ARCH. Then I must kill the villain, to have him out of the way.

GIB. Hold, hold, sir, we are but three, upon my honor.

ARCH. Scrub, will you undertake to secure him?

SCRUB. Not I, sir; kill him, kill him!

ARCH. Run to Gipsy's chamber, there you'll find the doctor; bring him hither presently. — (*Exit* SCRUB, *running.*) Come, rogue, if you have a short prayer, say it.

GIB. Sir, I have no prayer at all; the government has provided a chaplain to say prayers for us on these occasions.

MRS. SUL. Pray, sir, don't kill him. You fright me as much as him.

ARCH. The dog shall die, madam, for being the occasion of my disappointment. — Sirrah, this moment is your last.

GIB. Sir, I'll give you two hundred pound to spare my life.

ARCH. Have you no more, rascal?

GIB. Yes, sir, I can command four hundred, but I must reserve two of 'em to save my life at the sessions.

(*Enter* SCRUB *and* FOIGARD.)

ARCH. Here, doctor, I suppose Scrub and you between you may manage him. — Lay hold of him, doctor.

(FOIGARD *lays hold of* GIBBET.)

GIB. What! turned over to the priest already! — Look ye, doctor, you come before your time; I an't condemned yet, I thank ye.

FOI. Come, my dear joy, I vill secure your body and your shoul too; I vill make you a good Catholic, and give you an absolution.

GIB. Absolution! can you procure me a pardon, doctor?

FOI. No, joy. —

GIB. Then you and your absolution may go to the devil!

ARCH. Convey him into the cellar; there bind him. — Take the pistol, and if he offers to resist, shoot him through the head — and come back to us with all the speed you can.

SCRUB. Ay, ay; come, doctor, do you hold him fast, and I'll guard him.

[*Exit* FOIGARD *with* GIBBET, SCRUB *following.*]

MRS. SUL. But how came the doctor ——

ARCH. In short, madam — (*Shrieking without.*) 'Sdeath! the rogues are at work with the other ladies. — I'm vexed I parted with the pistol; but I must fly to their assistance. — Will you stay here, madam, or venture yourself with me?

MRS. SUL. Oh, with you, dear sir, with you.

(*Takes him by the arm and exeunt.*)

Scene [III.] — *Another Apartment in the same House*

(*Enter* Hounslow *dragging in* Lady Bountiful, *and* Bagshot *hauling in* Dorinda; *the rogues with swords drawn.*)

Houn. Come, come, your jewels, mistress!

Bag. Your keys, your keys, old gentlewoman!

(*Enter* Aimwell *and* Cherry.)

Aim. Turn this way, villains! I durst engage an army in such a cause.

(*He engages 'em both.*)

Dor. O madam, had I but a sword to help the brave man!

Lady Boun. There's three or four hanging up in the hall; but they won't draw. I'll go fetch one, however.

(*Exit.*)

(*Enter* Archer *and* Mrs. Sullen.)

Arch. Hold, hold, my lord! every man his bird, pray.

(*They engage man to man; the rogues are thrown and disarmed.*)

Cher. [*aside*]. What! the rogues taken! then they'll impeach my father; I must give him timely notice. (*Runs out.*)

Arch. Shall we kill the rogues?

Aim. No, no, we'll bind them.

Arch. Ay, ay. — (*To* Mrs. Sullen, *who stands by him.*) Here, madam, lend me your garter.

Mrs. Sul. (*aside*). The devil's in this fellow! he fights, loves, and banters, all in a breath. — [*Aloud.*] Here's a cord that the rogues brought with 'em, I suppose.

Arch. Right, right, the rogue's destiny, a rope to hang himself. — Come, my lord — This is but a scandalous sort of an office (*Binding the highwaymen together*), if our adventures should end in this sort of hangman-work; but I hope there is something in prospect that ——

(*Enter* Scrub.)

Well, Scrub, have you secured your Tartar?

Scrub. Yes, sir; I left the priest and him disputing about religion.

Aim. And pray carry these gentlemen to reap the benefit of the controversy.

(*Delivers the prisoners to* Scrub, *who leads 'em out.*)

Mrs. Sul. Pray, sister, how came my lord here?

Dor. And pray, how came the gentleman here?

Mrs. Sul. I'll tell you the greatest piece of villainy —

(*They talk in dumb show.*)

Aim. I fancy, Archer, you have been more successful in your adventures than the house-breakers.

Arch. No matter for my adventure, yours is the principal. — Press her this minute to marry you — now while she's hurried between the palpitation of her fear and the joy of her deliverance, now while the tide of her spirits are at high-flood. — Throw yourself at her feet, speak some romantic nonsense or other — address her like Alexander in the height of his victory, confound her senses, bear down her reason, and away with her. — The priest is in the cellar, and dare not refuse to do the work.

([*Re-*]*enter* Lady Bountiful.)

Aim. But how shall I get off without being observed?

Arch. You a lover, and not find a way to get off! — Let me see ——

Aim. You bleed, Archer.

Arch. 'Sdeath, I'm glad on't; this wound will do the business. — I'll amuse the old lady and Mrs. Sullen about dressing my wound, while you carry off Dorinda.

Lady Boun. Gentlemen, could we understand how you would be gratified for the services ——

Arch. Come, come, my lady, this is no time for compliments; I'm wounded, madam.

Lady Boun., Mrs. Sul. How! wounded!

Dor. I hope, sir, you have received no hurt?

Aim. None but what you may cure ——

(*Makes love in dumb show.*)

Lady Boun. Let me see your arm, sir. — I must have some powder-sugar to stop the blood. — O me! an ugly gash, upon my word, sir! You must go into bed.

Arch. Ay, my lady, a bed would do very well. — (*To* Mrs. Sullen.) Madam, will you do me the favor to conduct me to a chamber.

Lady Boun. Do, do, daughter — while I get the lint and the probe and the plaster ready.

(*Runs out one way*, Aimwell *carries off* Dorinda *another.*)

Arch. Come, madam, why don't you obey your mother's commands?

Mrs. Sul. How can you, after what is passed, have the confidence to ask me?

Arch. And if you go to that, how can you, after what is passed, have the confidence to deny me? — Was not this blood shed in your defence, and my life exposed for your protection? — Look ye, madam, I'm none of your romantic fools, that fight giants and monsters for nothing; my valor is downright Swiss; I'm a soldier of fortune, and must be paid.

Mrs. Sul. 'Tis ungenerous in you, sir, to upbraid me with your services!

Arch. 'Tis ungenerous in you, madam, not to reward 'em.

Mrs. Sul. How! at the expense of my honor?

Arch. Honor! can honor consist with ingratitude? If you would deal like a woman of honor, do like a man of honor. D'ye think I would deny you in such a case?

(*Enter a Servant.*)

Serv. Madam, my lady ordered me to tell you that your brother is below at the gate.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Sul. My brother! Heavens be praised! — Sir, he shall thank you for your services; he has it in his power.

Arch. Who is your brother, madam?

Mrs. Sul. Sir Charles Freeman. — You'll excuse me, sir; I must go and receive him.

[*Exit.*]

Arch. Sir Charles Freeman! 'Sdeath and hell! my old acquaintance. Now unless Aimwell has made good use of his time, all our fair machine goes souse into the sea like the Eddystone.

(*Exit.*)

Scene [IV.] — *The Gallery in the same House*

(*Enter* Aimwell *and* Dorinda.)

Dor. Well, well, my lord, you have conquered; your late generous action will, I hope, plead for my easy yielding; though I must own, your lordship had a friend in the fort before.

Aim. The sweets of Hybla dwell upon her tongue! — Here, doctor ——

(*Enter* Foigard, *with a book.*)

Foi. Are you prepared, boat?

Dor. I'm ready. But first, my lord, one word. — I have a frightful example of a hasty marriage in my own family; when I reflect upon't, it shocks me. Pray, my lord, consider a little ——

Aim. Consider! Do you doubt my honor or my love?

Dor. Neither. I do believe you equally just as brave; and were your whole sex drawn out for me to choose, I should not cast a look upon the multitude if you were absent. — But, my lord, I'm a woman; colors, concealments may hide a thousand faults in me — therefore know me better first. I hardly dare affirm I know myself in anything except my love.

Aim. (*aside*). Such goodness who could injure! I find myself unequal to the task of villain; she has gained my soul, and made it honest like her own. — I cannot, cannot hurt her. — [*Aloud.*] Doctor, retire. — [*Exit* Foigard.] Madam, behold your lover and your proselyte, and judge of my passion by my conversion! — I'm all a lie, nor dare I give a fiction to your arms; I'm all counterfeit, except my passion.

Dor. Forbid it, Heaven! a counterfeit!

Aim. I am no lord, but a poor needy man, come with a mean, a scandalous design to prey upon your fortune. But the beauties of your mind and person have so won me from myself that, like a trusty servant, I prefer the interest of my mistress to my own.

DOR. Sure I have had the dream of some poor mariner, a sleepy image of a welcome port, and wake involved in storms! — Pray, sir, who are you?

AIM. Brother to the man whose title I usurped, but stranger to his honor or his fortune.

DOR. Matchless honesty! — Once I was proud, sir, of your wealth and title, but now am prouder that you want it; now I can show my love was justly levelled, and had no aim but love. — Doctor, come in.

(*Enter* FOIGARD *at one door*, GIPSY *at another, who whispers* DORINDA.)

[*To* FOIGARD.] Your pardon, sir, we sha'not want you now. — [*To* AIMWELL.] Sir, you must excuse me — I'll wait on you presently. (*Exit with* GIPSY.)

FOI. Upon my shoul, now, dis is foolish. (*Exit.*)

AIM. Gone! and bid the priest depart! — It has an ominous look.

(*Enter* ARCHER.)

ARCH. Courage, Tom! — Shall I wish you joy?

AIM. No.

ARCH. 'Oons, man, what ha' you been doing?

AIM. O Archer! my honesty, I fear, has ruined me.

ARCH. How?

AIM. I have discovered myself.

ARCH. Discovered! and without my consent? What! have I embarked my small remains in the same bottom with yours, and you dispose of all without my partnership?

AIM. O Archer! I own my fault.

ARCH. After conviction — 'tis then too late for pardon. — You may remember, Mr. Aimwell, that you proposed this folly — as you begun, so end it. — Henceforth I'll hunt my fortune single. — So farewell!

AIM. Stay, my dear Archer, but a minute.

ARCH. Stay! what, to be despised, exposed, and laughed at! No, I would sooner change conditions with the worst of the rogues we just now bound, than bear one scornful smile from the proud knight that once I treated as my equal.

AIM. What knight?

ARCH. Sir Charles Freeman, brother to the lady that I had almost — but no matter for that; 'tis a cursed night's work, and so I leave you to make the best on't. (*Going.*)

AIM. Freeman! — One word, Archer. Still I have hopes; methought she received my confession with pleasure.

ARCH. 'Sdeath! who doubts it?

AIM. She consented after to the match; and still I dare believe she will be just.

ARCH. To herself, I warrant her, as you should have been.

AIM. By all my hopes, she comes, and smiling comes!

([*Re-*]*enter* DORINDA, *mighty gay.*)

DOR. Come, my dear lord — I fly with impatience to your arms. — The minutes of my absence was a tedious year. Where's this tedious priest?

([*Re-*]*enter* FOIGARD.)

ARCH. 'Oons, a brave girl!

DOR. I suppose, my lord, this gentleman is privy to our affairs?

ARCH. Yes, yes, madam, I'm to be your father.

DOR. Come, priest, do your office.

ARCH. Make haste, make haste, couple 'em any way. — (*Takes* AIMWELL'S *hand.*) Come, madam, I'm to give you ——

DOR. My mind's altered; I won't.

ARCH. Eh! —

AIM. I'm confounded!

FOI. Upon my shoul, and sho is myshelf.

ARCH. What's the matter now, madam?

DOR. Look ye, sir, one generous action deserves another. — This gentleman's honor obliged him to hide nothing from me; my justice engages me to conceal nothing from him. In short, sir, you are the person that you thought you counterfeited; you are the true Lord Viscount Aimwell, and I wish your Lordship joy. — Now, priest, you may be gone; if my Lord is pleased now with the match, let his Lordship marry me in the face of the world.

Aim., Arch. What does she mean?

Dor. Here's a witness for my truth.

(*Enter* Sir Charles [Freeman] *and* Mrs. Sullen.)

Sir Chas. My dear Lord Aimwell, I wish you joy.

Aim. Of what?

Sir Chas. Of your honor and estate. Your brother died the day before I left London; and all your friends have writ after you to Brussels; among the rest I did myself the honor.

Arch. Hark ye, sir knight, don't you banter now?

Sir Chas. 'Tis truth, upon my honor.

Aim. Thanks to the pregnant stars that formed this accident!

Arch. Thanks to the womb of time that brought it forth! — away with it!

Aim. Thanks to my guardian angel that led me to the prize!

(*Taking* Dorinda's *hand.*)

Arch. And double thanks to the noble Sir Charles Freeman. — My Lord, I wish you joy. — My Lady, I wish you joy. — Egad, Sir Freeman, you're the honestest fellow living! — 'Sdeath, I'm grown strange airy upon this matter! — My Lord, how d'ye? — A word, my Lord; don't you remember something of a previous agreement, that entitles me to the moiety of this lady's fortune, which, I think, will amount to five thousand pound?

Aim. Not a penny, Archer; you would ha' cut my throat just now, because I would not deceive this lady.

Arch. Ay, and I'll cut your throat again, if you should deceive her now.

Aim. That's what I expected; and to end the dispute, the lady's fortune is ten thousand pound; we'll divide stakes: take the ten thousand pound or the lady.

Dor. How! is your Lordship so indifferent?

Arch. No, no, no, madam! his Lordship knows very well that I'll take the money; I leave you to his Lordship, and so we're both provided for.

(*Enter* Count Bellair.)

Count Bel. *Mesdames et Messieurs*, I am your servant trice humble! I hear you be rob here.

Aim. The ladies have been in some danger, sir.

Count Bel. And, begar, our inn be rob too!

Aim. Our inn! by whom?

Count Bel. By the landlord, begar! — Garzoon, he has rob himself and run away!

Arch. Robbed himself!

Count Bel. Ay, begar, and me too of a hundre pound.

Arch. A hundred pound?

Count Bel. Yes, that I owed him.

Aim. Our money's gone, Frank.

Arch. Rot the money! my wench is gone. — [*To* Count Bellair.] *Savez-vous quelque chose de Mademoiselle Cherry?*

(*Enter a Countryman with a strong-box and a letter.*)

Coun. Is there one Martin here?

Arch. Ay, ay, — who wants him?

Coun. I have a box here and letter for him.

Arch. (*taking the box*). Ha, ha, ha! what's here? Legerdemain! — By this light, my lord, our money again! — But this unfolds the riddle. — (*Opening the letter, reads*) Hum, hum, hum! — Oh, 'tis for the public good, and must be communicated to the company.

[*Reads.*]

Mr. Martin,

My father being afraid of an impeachment by the rogues that are taken to-night, is gone off; but if you can procure him a pardon, he will make great discoveries that may be useful to the country. Could I have met you instead of your master to-night, I would have delivered myself into your hands, with a sum that much exceeds that in your strong-box, which I have sent you, with an assurance to my dear Martin that I shall ever be his most faithful friend till death.

Cherry Boniface.

There's a billet-doux for you! — As for the father, I think he ought to be encouraged; and for the daughter — pray, my Lord, persuade your bride to take her into her service instead of Gipsy.

Aim. I can assure you, madam, your deliverance was owing to her discovery.

Dor. Your command, my Lord, will do without the obligation. I'll take care of her.

Sir Chas. This good company meets opportunely in favor of a design I have in behalf of my unfortunate sister. I intend to part her from her husband — gentlemen, will you assist me?

Arch. Assist you! 'Sdeath, who would not?

Count Bel. Assist! Garzoon, we all assest!

(*Enter* Sullen.)

Sul. What's all this? — They tell me, spouse, that you had like to have been robbed.

Mrs. Sul. Truly, spouse, I was pretty near it — had not these two gentlemen interposed.

Sul. How came these gentlemen here?

Mrs. Sul. That's his way of returning thanks, you must know.

Count Bel. Garzoon, the question be apropos for all dat.

Sir Chas. You promised last night, sir, that you would deliver your lady to me this morning.

Sul. Humph!

Arch. Humph! what do you mean by humph? — Sir, you shall deliver her! — in short, sir, we have saved you and your family; and if you are not civil, we'll unbind the rogues, join with 'um, and set fire to your house. — What does the man mean? not part with his wife!

Count Bel. Ay, garzoon, de man no understan common justice.

Mrs. Sul. Hold, gentlemen, all things here must move by consent, compulsion would spoil us. Let my dear and I talk the matter over, and you shall judge it between us.

Sul. Let me know first who are to be our judges. — Pray, sir, who are you?

Sir Chas. I am Sir Charles Freeman, come to take away your wife.

Sul. And you, good sir?

Aim. Charles, Viscount Aimwell, come to take away your sister.

Sul. And you, pray, sir?

Arch. Francis Archer, esquire, come ——

Sul. To take away my mother, I hope. — Gentlemen, you're heartily welcome; I never met with three more obliging people since I was born! — And now, my dear, if you please, you shall have the first word.

Arch. And the last, for five pound!

Mrs. Sul. Spouse!

Sul. Rib!

Mrs. Sul. How long have we been married?

Sul. By the almanac, fourteen months — but by my account, fourteen years.

Mrs. Sul. 'Tis thereabout by my reckoning.

Count Bel. Garzoon, their account will agree.

Mrs. Sul. Pray, spouse, what did you marry for?

Sul. To get an heir to my estate.

Sir Chas. And have you succeeded?

Sul. No.

Arch. The condition fails of his side. — Pray, madam, what did you marry for?

Mrs. Sul. To support the weakness of my sex by the strength of his, and to enjoy the pleasures of an agreeable society.

Sir Chas. Are your expectations answered?

Mrs. Sul. No.

Count Bel. A clear case! a clear case!

Sir Chas. What are the bars to your mutual contentment?

Mrs. Sul. In the first place, I can't drink ale with him.

Sul. Nor can I drink tea with her.

Mrs. Sul. I can't hunt with you.

Sul. Nor can I dance with you.

Mrs. Sul. I hate cocking and racing.

Sul. And I abhor ombre and piquet.

Mrs. Sul. Your silence is intolerable.

Sul. Your prating is worse.

Mrs. Sul. Have we not been a perpetual offence to each other? a gnawing vulture at the heart?

Sul. A frightful goblin to the sight?

Mrs. Sul. A porcupine to the feeling?

Sul. Perpetual wormwood to the taste?

Mrs. Sul. Is there on earth a thing we could agree in?

Sul. Yes — to part.

Mrs. Sul. With all my heart.

Sul. Your hand.

Mrs. Sul. Here.

Sul. These hands joined us, these shall part us. — Away!

Mrs. Sul. North.

Sul. South.

Mrs. Sul. East.

Sul. West — far as the poles asunder.

Count Bel. Begar, the ceremony be vera pretty!

Sir Chas. Now, Mr. Sullen, there wants only my sister's fortune to make us easy.

Sul. Sir Charles, you love your sister, and I love her fortune; every one to his fancy.

Arch. Then you won't refund —

Sul. Not a stiver.

Arch. Then I find, madam, you must e'en go to your prison again.

Count Bel. What is the portion?

Sir Chas. Ten thousand pound, sir.

Count Bel. Garzoon, I'll pay it, and she shall go home wid me.

Arch. Ha, ha, ha! French all over. — Do you know, sir, what ten thousand pound English is?

Count Bel. No, begar, not justement.

Arch. Why, sir, 'tis a hundred thousand livres.

Count Bel. A hundre tousand livres! — A garzoon! me canno' do't; your beauties and their fortunes are both too much for me.

Arch. Then I will. — This night's adventure has proved strangely lucky to us all — for Captain Gibbet in his walk had made bold, Mr. Sullen, with your study and escritoire, and had taken out all the writings of your estate, all the articles of marriage with this lady, bills, bonds, leases, receipts to an infinite value. I took 'em from him, and I deliver them to Sir Charles.

(*Gives him a parcel of papers and parchments.*)

Sul. How, my writings! — my head aches consumedly. — Well, gentlemen, you shall have her fortune, but I can't talk. If you have a mind, Sir Charles, to be merry, and celebrate my sister's wedding and my divorce, you may command my house — but my head aches consumedly. — Scrub, bring me a dram.

Arch. (*to* Mrs. Sullen). Madam, there's a country dance to the trifle that I sung to-day; your hand, and we'll lead it up.

(*Here a Dance.*)

Arch. 'Twould be hard to guess which of these parties is the better pleased, the couple joined, or the couple parted; the one rejoicing in hopes of an untasted happiness, and the other in their deliverance from an experienced misery.

Both happy in their several states we find,
Those parted by consent, and those conjoined.
Consent, if mutual, saves the lawyer's fee, —
Consent is law enough to set you free.

AN EPILOGUE

Designed to be spoken in "The Beaux' Stratagem."

If to our play your judgment can't be kind,
Let its expiring author pity find:
Survey his mournful case with melting eyes,
Nor let the bard be damned before he dies.
Forbear, you fair, on his last scene to frown,
But his true exit with a plaudit crown;
Then shall the dying poet cease to fear
The dreadful knell, while your applause he hears.
At Leuctra so the conqu'ring Theban died,
Claimed his friends' praises, but their tears denied:
Pleased in the pangs of death he greatly thought
Conquest with loss of life but cheaply bought.
The difference this, the Greek was one would fight,
As brave, though not so gay, as Sergeant Kite;
Ye sons of Will's, what's that to those who write?
To Thebes alone the Grecian owed his bays,
You may the bard above the hero raise,
Since yours is greater than Athenian praise.

FINIS

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

OR

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT

By OLIVER GOLDSMITH

(1773)

TO SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

Dear Sir,

By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honor to inform the public, that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them, that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety.

I have, particularly, reason to thank you for your partiality to this performance. The undertaking a comedy, not merely sentimental, was very dangerous; and Mr. Colman, who saw this piece in its various stages, always thought it so. However, I ventured to trust it to the public; and, though it was necessarily delayed till late in the season, I have every reason to be grateful.

I am, dear sir,
Your most sincere friend
And admirer,
Oliver Goldsmith.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Sir Charles Marlow
Young Marlow (his son)
Hardcastle
Hastings
Tony Lumpkin
Diggory

Mrs. Hardcastle
Miss Hardcastle
Miss Neville
Maid

Landlord, Servants, &c. &c.

PROLOGUE

By David Garrick, Esq.

(*Enter Mr. Woodward, dressed in black, and holding a handkerchief to his eyes.*)

Excuse me, sirs, I pray — I can't yet speak —
I'm crying now — and have been all the week!
'*Tis not alone this mourning suit,* good masters;
I've that within — for which there are no plasters!
Pray would you know the reason why I'm crying?
The Comic Muse, long sick, is now a-dying!
And if she goes, my tears will never stop;
For, as a player, I can't squeeze out one drop;
I am undone, that's all — shall lose my bread —
I'd rather, but that's nothing — lose my head.
When the sweet maid is laid upon the bier,
Shuter and I shall be chief mourners here.
To her a mawkish drab of spurious breed,
Who deals in sentimentals, will succeed.
Poor Ned and I are dead to all intents;
We can as soon speak Greek as sentiments!
Both nervous grown, to keep our spirits up,
We now and then take down a hearty cup.
What shall we do? If Comedy forsake us,
They'll turn us out, and no one else will take us.
But why can't I be moral? — Let me try:
My heart thus pressing — fix'd my face and eye —
With a sententious look, that nothing means,
(Faces are blocks in sentimental scenes,)
Thus I begin — *All is not gold that glitters,*
Pleasure seems sweet, but proves a glass of bitters.
When Ignorance enters, Folly is at hand;
Learning is better far than house and land.
Let not your virtue trip; who trips may stumble,
And virtue is not virtue, if she tumble.
  I give it up — morals won't do for me;
To make you laugh, I must play tragedy.
One hope remains, — hearing the maid was ill,
A Doctor comes this night to show his skill.
To cheer her heart, and give your muscles motion,
He, in Five Draughts prepared, presents a potion:
A kind of magic charm; for, be assured,
If you will swallow it, the maid is cured:
But desperate the Doctor, and her case is,
If you reject the dose, and make wry faces.
This truth he boasts, will boast it while he lives,
No poisonous drugs are mixed in what he gives.
Should he succeed, you'll give him his degree;
If not, within he will receive no fee!
The college you, must his pretensions back,
Pronounce him Regular, or dub him Quack.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

OR

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT

ACT I.

SCENE [I.] — *A chamber in an old-fashioned house.*

(*Enter* MRS. HARDCASTLE *and* MR. HARDCASTLE.)

MRS. HARDCASTLE. I vow, Mr. Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country but ourselves that does not take a trip to town now and then, to rub off the rust a little? There's the two Miss Hoggs, and our neighbor Mrs. Grigsby, go to take a month's polishing every winter.

HARDCASTLE. Ay, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Ay, your times were fine times indeed; you have been telling us of them for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling mansion, that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs. Oddfish, the curate's wife, and little Cripplegate, the lame dancing-master; and all our entertainment your old stories of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough. I hate such old-fashioned trumpery.

HARDCASTLE. And I love it. I love everything that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine; and, I believe, Dorothy, (*taking her hand,*) you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Lord, Mr. Hardcastle, you're forever at your Dorothys and your old wifes. You may be a Darby, but I'll be no Joan, I promise you. I'm not so old as you'd make me by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty and make money of that.

HARDCASTLE. Let me see; twenty added to twenty — makes just fifty and seven!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. It's false, Mr. Hardcastle; I was but twenty when I was brought to bed of Tony, that I had by Mr. Lumpkin, my first husband; and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

HARDCASTLE. Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Ay, you have taught him finely!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. No matter. Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year.

HARDCASTLE. Learning, quotha! a mere composition of tricks and mischief!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Humor, my dear; nothing but humor. Come, Mr. Hardcastle, you must allow the boy a little humor.

HARDCASTLE. I'd sooner allow him a horse-pond! If burning the footmen's shoes, frighting the maids, and worrying the kittens, be humor, he has it. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popped my bald head in Mrs. Frizzle's face.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. And I am to blame? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good. A school would be his death. When he comes to be a little stronger, who knows what a year or two's Latin may do for him?

Hardcastle. Latin for him! A cat and fiddle! No, no; the alehouse and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Well, we must not snub the poor boy now, for I believe we shan't have him long among us. Anybody that looks in his face may see he's consumptive.

Hardcastle. Ay, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms.

Mrs. Hardcastle. He coughs sometimes.

Hardcastle. Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way.

Mrs. Hardcastle. I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

Hardcastle. And truly, so am I; for he sometimes whoops like a speaking-trumpet — (Tony *hallooing behind the scenes.*) — Oh, there he goes — a very consumptive figure, truly!

(*Enter* Tony, *crossing the stage.*)

Mrs. Hardcastle. Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give papa and I a little of your company, lovey?

Tony. I'm in haste, mother; I cannot stay.

Mrs. Hardcastle. You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear; you look most shockingly.

Tony. I can't stay, I tell you. *The Three Pigeons* expects me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

Hardcastle. Ay, the alehouse, the old place; I thought so.

Mrs. Hardcastle. A low, paltry set of fellows.

Tony. Not so low, neither. There's Dick Muggins, the exciseman; Jack Slang, the horse-doctor; little Aminadab, that grinds the music-box; and Tom Twist, that spins the pewter platter.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least.

Tony. As for disappointing them, I should not so much mind; but I can't abide to disappoint myself.

Mrs. Hardcastle (*detaining him*). You shan't go.

Tony. I will, I tell you.

Mrs. Hardcastle. I say you shan't.

Tony. We'll see which is the strongest, you or I.

(*Exit, hauling her out.*)

Hardcastle (*solus*). Ay, there goes a pair that only spoil each other. But is not the whole age in a combination to drive sense and discretion out of doors? There's my pretty darling, Kate; the fashions of the times have almost infected her too. By living a year or two in town, she is as fond of gauze and French frippery as the best of them.

(*Enter* Miss Hardcastle.)

Blessings on my pretty innocence! Dressed out as usual, my Kate. Goodness! what a quantity of superfluous silk hast thou got about thee, girl! I could never teach the fools of this age that the indigent world could be clothed out of the trimmings of the vain.

Miss Hardcastle. You know our agreement, sir. You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner; and in the evening I put on my housewife's dress to please you.

Hardcastle. Well, remember, I insist on the terms of our agreement; and, by the bye, I believe I shall have occasion to try your obedience this very evening.

Miss Hardcastle. I protest, sir, I don't comprehend your meaning.

Hardcastle. Then, to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman I have chosen to be your husband from town this very day. I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out, and that he intends to follow himself shortly after.

Miss Hardcastle. Indeed! I wish I had known something of this before. Bless me, how shall I behave? It's a thousand to one I shan't like him; our meeting will be so formal, and so like a thing of business, that I shall find no room for friendship or esteem.

Hardcastle. Depend upon it, child, I'll never control your choice; but Mr. Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend, Sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me talk so often. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar, and is designed for an employment in the service of his country. I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding.

Miss Hardcastle. Is he?

Hardcastle. Very generous.

Miss Hardcastle. I believe I shall like him.

Hardcastle. Young and brave.

Miss Hardcastle. I'm sure I shall like him.

Hardcastle. And very handsome.

Miss Hardcastle. My dear papa, say no more, (*kissing his hand,*) he's mine, I'll have him!

Hardcastle. And, to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world.

Miss Hardcastle. Eh! you have frozen me to death again. That word *reserved* has undone all the rest of his accomplishments. A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband.

Hardcastle. On the contrary, modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues. It was the very feature in his character that first struck me.

Miss Hardcastle. He must have more striking features to catch me, I promise you. However, if he be so young, so handsome, and so everything as you mention, I believe he'll do still; I think I'll have him.

Hardcastle. Ay, Kate, but there is still an obstacle. It's more than an even wager he may not have you.

Miss Hardcastle. My dear papa, why will you mortify one so? Well, if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at his indifference, I'll only break my glass for its flattery, set my cap to some newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer.

Hardcastle. Bravely resolved! In the mean time, I'll go prepare the servants for his reception; as we seldom see company, they want as much training as a company of recruits the first day's muster. (*Exit.*)

Miss Hardcastle (*sola*). Lud, this news of papa's puts me all in a flutter. *Young, handsome;* these he put last, but I put them foremost. *Sensible, good-natured;* I like all that. But then, *reserved* and *sheepish;* that's much against him. Yet, can't he be cured of his timidity by being taught to be proud of his wife? Yes; and can't I — but I vow I'm disposing of the husband, before I have secured the lover.

(*Enter* Miss Neville.)

Miss Hardcastle. I'm glad you're come, Neville, my dear. Tell me, Constance, how do I look this evening? Is there anything whimsical about me? Is it one of my well-looking days, child? Am I in face to-day?

Miss Neville. Perfectly, my dear. Yet, now I look again — bless me! — surely no accident has happened among the canary birds or the gold-fishes? Has your brother or the cat been meddling? Or has the last novel been too moving?

Miss Hardcastle. No; nothing of all this. I have been threatened — I can scarce get it out — I have been threatened with a lover.

Miss Neville. And his name —

Miss Hardcastle. Is Marlow.

Miss Neville. Indeed!

Miss Hardcastle. The son of Sir Charles Marlow.

Miss Neville. As I live, the most intimate friend of Mr. Hastings, my admirer. They are never asunder. I believe you must have seen him when we lived in town.

Miss Hardcastle. Never.

Miss Neville. He's a very singular character, I assure you. Among women of reputation and virtue, he is the modestest man alive; but his acquaintance give him a very different character among creatures of another stamp: you understand me.

Miss Hardcastle. An odd character, indeed! I shall never be able to manage him. What shall I do? Pshaw, think no more of him, but trust to occurrences for success. But how goes on your own affair, my dear? Has my mother been courting you for my brother Tony, as usual?

Miss Neville. I have just come from one of our agreeable *tête-à-têtes*. She has been saying a hundred tender things, and setting off her pretty monster as the very pink of perfection.

Miss Hardcastle. And her partiality is such that she actually thinks him so. A fortune like yours is no small temptation. Besides, as she has the sole management of it, I'm not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family.

Miss Neville. A fortune like mine, which chiefly consists in jewels, is no such mighty temptation. But at any rate, if my dear Hastings be but constant, I make no doubt to be too hard for her at last. However, I let her suppose that I am in love with her son; and she never once dreams that my affections are fixed upon another.

Miss Hardcastle. My good brother holds out stoutly. I could almost love him for hating you so.

Miss Neville. It is a good-natured creature at bottom, and I'm sure would wish to see me married to anybody but himself. But my aunt's bell rings for our afternoon's walk round the improvements. *Allons*. Courage is necessary, as our affairs are critical.

Miss Hardcastle. Would it were bedtime, and all were well.

(*Exeunt.*)

Scene [II.]—*An alehouse room.*

(*Several shabby fellows with punch and tobacco;* Tony *at the head of the table, a little higher than the rest; a mallet in his hand.*)

Omnes. Hurrea, hurrea, hurrea, bravo!

First Fellow. Now, gentlemen, silence for a song. The Squire is going to knock himself down for a song.

Omnes. Ay, a song, a song!

Tony. Then I'll sing you, gentlemen, a song I made upon this alehouse, *The Three Pigeons*.

SONG

Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain,
  With grammar, and nonsense, and learning;
Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,
  Gives *genus* a better discerning.
Let them brag of their heathenish gods,
  Their Lethes, their Styxes, and Stygians,
Their quis, and their quæs, and their quods,
  They're all but a parcel of pigeons.
    Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

When Methodist preachers come down,
  A-preaching that drinking is sinful,
I'll wager the rascals a crown,
  They always preach best with a skinful.
But when you come down with your pence,
  For a slice of their scurvy religion,
I'll leave it to all men of sense,
  That you, my good friend, are the pigeon.
    Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

Then come, put the jorum about,
  And let us be merry and clever,
Our hearts and our liquors are stout,
  Here's the Three Jolly Pigeons for ever.
Let some cry up woodcock or hare,
  Your bustards, your ducks, and your widgeons;
But of all the birds in the air,
  Here's a health to the Three Jolly Pigeons.
    Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

Omnes. Bravo, bravo!

First Fellow. The Squire has got some spunk in him.

Second Fellow. I loves to hear him sing, bekeays he never gives us nothing that's low.

Third Fellow. Oh, damn anything that's low, I cannot bear it!

Fourth Fellow. The genteel thing is the genteel thing any time; if so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation accordingly.

Third Fellow. I like the maxum of it, Master Muggins. What though I am obligated to dance a bear, a man may be a gentleman for all that. May this be my poison, if my bear ever dances but to the very genteelest of tunes: *Water Parted*, or the minuet in *Ariadne*.

Second Fellow. What a pity it is the Squire is not come to his own. It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him.

Tony. Ecod, and so it would, Master

Slang. I'd then show what it was to keep choice of company.

Second Fellow. Oh, he takes after his own father for that. To be sure, old Squire Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on. For winding the straight horn, or beating a thicket for a hare, or a wench, he never had his fellow. It was a saying in the place, that he kept the best horses, dogs, and girls, in the whole county.

Tony. Ecod, and when I'm of age I'll be no bastard, I promise you. I have been thinking of Bet Bouncer and the miller's gray mare to begin with. But come, my boys, drink about and be merry, for you pay no reckoning. Well, Stingo, what's the matter?

(*Enter Landlord.*)

Landlord. There be two gentlemen in a post-chaise at the door. They have lost their way upo' the forest; and they are talking something about Mr. Hardcastle.

Tony. As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister. Do they seem to be Londoners?

Landlord. I believe they may. They look woundily like Frenchmen.

Tony. Then desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling. (*Exit Landlord.*) Gentlemen, as they mayn't be good enough company for you, step down for a moment, and I'll be with you in the squeezing of a lemon.

(*Exeunt mob.*)

Tony (*solus*). Father-in-law has been calling me whelp and hound this half year. Now, if I pleased, I could be so revenged upon the old grumbletonian. But then I'm afraid, — afraid of what? I shall soon be worth fifteen hundred a year, and let him frighten me out of *that* if he can.

(*Enter Landlord, conducting* Marlow *and* Hastings.)

Marlow. What a tedious, uncomfortable day have we had of it! We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come above threescore!

Hastings. And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of yours, that would not let us inquire more frequently on the way.

Marlow. I own, Hastings, I am unwilling to lay myself under an obligation to every one I meet, and often stand the chance of an unmannerly answer.

Hastings. At present, however, we are not likely to receive any answer.

Tony. No offence, gentlemen. But I'm told you have been inquiring for one Mr. Hardcastle, in [these] parts. Do you know what part of the country you are in?

Hastings. Not in the least, sir, but should thank you for information.

Tony. Nor the way you came?

Hastings. No, sir; but if you can inform us —

Tony. Why, gentlemen, if you know neither the road you are going, nor where you are, nor the road you came, the first thing I have to inform you is, that — you have lost your way.

Marlow. We wanted no ghost to tell us that.

Tony. Pray, gentlemen, may I be so bold as to ask the place from whence you came?

Marlow. That's not necessary towards directing us where we are to go.

Tony. No offence; but question for question is all fair, you know. — Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardcastle a cross-grained, old-fashioned, whimsical fellow, with an ugly face, a daughter, and a pretty son?

Hastings. We have not seen the gentleman, but he has the family you mention.

Tony. The daughter, a tall, trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole; the son, a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that everybody is fond of?

Marlow. Our information differs in this. The daughter is said to be well-bred, and beautiful; the son an awkward booby, reared up and spoiled at his mother's apron-string.

Tony. He-he-hem! — Then, gentlemen, all I have to tell you is, that you won't reach Mr. Hardcastle's house this night, I believe.

Hastings. Unfortunate!

Tony. It's a damned long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way. Stingo, tell the gentlemen the way to Mr. Hardcastle's; (*winking upon the Landlord,*) Mr. Hardcastle's of Quagmire Marsh, you understand me.

Landlord. Master Hardcastle's! Lack-a-daisy, my masters, you're come a deadly deal wrong! When you came to the bottom of the hill, you should have crossed down Squash-lane.

Marlow. Cross down Squash-lane?

Landlord. Then you were to keep straight forward, till you came to four roads.

Marlow. Come to where four roads meet?

Tony. Ay; but you must be sure to take only one of them.

Marlow. Oh sir, you're facetious.

Tony. Then, keeping to the right, you are to go sideways till you come upon Crack-skull Common: there you must look sharp for the track of the wheel, and go forward till you come to farmer Murrain's barn. Coming to the farmer's barn, you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill —

Marlow. Zounds, man! we could as soon find out the longitude!

Hastings. What's to be done, Marlow?

Marlow. This house promises but a poor reception; though perhaps the landlord can accommodate us.

Landlord. Alack, master, we have but one spare bed in the whole house.

Tony. And to my knowledge, that's taken up by three lodgers already. (*After a pause in which the rest seem disconcerted.*) I have hit it. Don't you think, Stingo, our landlady could accommodate the gentlemen by the fireside, with — three chairs and a bolster?

Hastings. I hate sleeping by the fireside.

Marlow. And I detest your three chairs and a bolster.

Tony. You do, do you? — then, let me see — what if you go on a mile further, to the Buck's Head; the old Buck's Head on the hill, one of the best inns in the whole county?

Hastings. O ho! so we have escaped an adventure for this night, however.

Landlord (*apart to* Tony). Sure, you ben't sending them to your father's as an inn, be you?

Tony. Mum, you fool you. Let *them* find that out. (*To them.*) You have only to keep on straight forward, till you come to a large old house by the road side. You'll see a pair of large horns over the door. That's the sign. Drive up the yard, and call stoutly about you.

Hastings. Sir, we are obliged to you. The servants can't miss the way?

Tony. No, no; but I tell you, though, the landlord is rich, and going to leave off business; so he wants to be thought a gentleman, saving your presence, he! he! he! He'll be for giving you his company; and, ecod, if you mind him, he'll persuade you that his mother was an alderman and his aunt a justice of peace.

Landlord. A troublesome old blade, to be sure; but a keeps as good wines and beds as any in the whole country.

Marlow. Well, if he supplies us with these, we shall want no further connection. We are to turn to the right, did you say?

Tony. No, no; straight forward. I'll just step myself, and show you a piece of the way. (*To the Landlord.*) Mum!

Landlord. Ah, bless your heart, for a sweet, pleasant — damn'd mischievous son of a whore. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT II.

Scene — *An old-fashioned house.*

(*Enter* Hardcastle, *followed by three or four awkward Servants.*)

Hardcastle. Well, I hope you are perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your places, and can show that you have been used to good company, without ever stirring from home.

Omnes. Ay, ay.

Hardcastle. When company comes,

you are not to pop out and stare, and then run in again, like frighted rabbits in a warren.

Omnes. No, no.

Hardcastle. You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a show at the side-table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind my chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger; and from your head, you blockhead, you. See how Diggory carries his hands. They're a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter.

Diggory. Ay, mind how I hold them. I learned to hold my hands this way, when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill —

Hardcastle. You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us talk, and not think of talking; you must see us drink, and not think of drinking; you must see us eat, and not think of eating.

Diggory. By the laws, your worship, that's parfectly unpossible. Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forward, ecod, he's always wishing for a mouthful himself.

Hardcastle. Blockhead! Is not a bellyful in the kitchen as good as a bellyful in the parlor? Stay your stomach with that reflection.

Diggory. Ecod, I thank your worship, I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry.

Hardcastle. Diggory, you are too talkative.— Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a-laughing, as if you made part of the company.

Diggory. Then, ecod, your worship must not tell the story of the Ould Grouse in the gun-room; I can't help laughing at that — he! he! he! — for the soul of me. We have laughed at that these twenty years — ha! ha! ha!

Hardcastle. Ha! ha! ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that; but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? A glass of wine, sir, if you please. (*To* Diggory.) — Eh, why don't you move?

Diggory. Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I'm as bauld as a lion.

Hardcastle. What, will nobody move?

First Servant. I'm not to leave this pleace.

Second Servant. I'm sure it's no pleace of mine.

Third Servant. Nor mine, for sartain.

Diggory. Wauns, and I'm sure it canna be mine.

Hardcastle. You numskulls! and so while, like your betters, you are quarrelling for places, the guests must be starved. Oh you dunces! I find I must begin all over again — But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard? To your posts, you blockheads! I'll go in the meantime, and give my old friend's son a hearty reception at the gate.

(*Exit* Hardcastle.)

Diggory. By the elevens, my pleace is quite gone out my head!

Roger. I know that my pleace is to be everywhere!

First Servant. Where the devil is mine?

Second Servant. My pleace is to be nowhere at all; and so I'ze go about my business!

(*Exeunt Servants, running about as if frighted, different ways.*)

(*Enter Servant with candles, showing in* Marlow *and* Hastings.)

Servant. Welcome, gentlemen, very welcome! This way.

Hastings. After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire. Upon my word, a very well-looking house; antique but creditable.

Marlow. The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good house-keeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn.

Hastings. As you say, we passengers

are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good side-board, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, inflame a reckoning confoundedly.

Marlow. Travellers, George, must pay in all places. The only difference is that in good inns you pay dearly for luxuries; in bad inns you are fleeced and starved.

Hastings. You have lived pretty much among them. In truth, I have been often surprised, that you who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense, and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance.

Marlow. The Englishman's malady. But tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talk of? My life has been chiefly spent in a college or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence. I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted with a single modest woman, except my mother. But among females of another class, you know —

Hastings. Ay, among them you are impudent enough, of all conscience.

Marlow. They are of *us*, you know.

Hastings. But in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler; you look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room.

Marlow. Why, man, that's because I *do* want to steal out of the room. Faith, I have often formed a resolution to break the ice, and rattle away at any rate. But I don't know how, a single glance from a pair of fine eyes has totally overset my resolution. An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I'll be hanged if a modest man can ever counterfeit impudence.

Hastings. If you could but say half the fine things to them, that I have heard you lavish upon the bar-maid of an inn, or even a college bed-maker —

Marlow. Why, George, I can't say fine things to them. They freeze, they petrify me. They may talk of a comet, or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle; but to me a modest woman, dressed out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

Hastings. Ha! ha! ha! At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry?

Marlow. Never; unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If, indeed, like an Eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grandmothers, and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad staring question of "Madam, will you marry me?" No, no, that's a strain much above me, I assure you.

Hastings. I pity you. But how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

Marlow. As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low; answer yes or no to all her demands. But for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face till I see my father's again.

Hastings. I'm surprised that one who is so warm a friend can be so cool a lover.

Marlow. To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you, the family don't know you; as my friend, you are sure of a reception, and let honor do the rest.

Hastings. My dear Marlow! But I'll suppress the emotion. Were I a wretch, meanly seeking to carry off a fortune, you should be the last man in the world I would apply to for assistance. But Miss Neville's person is all I ask, and that is mine, both from her deceased father's consent, and her own inclination.

Marlow. Happy man! you have talents and art to captivate any woman. I'm doomed to adore the sex, and yet to converse with the only part of it I despise. This stammer in my address, and this awkward [un]prepossessing visage of mine, can never permit me to soar above the reach of a milliner's 'prentice, or one of the Duchesses of Drury Lane. Pshaw! this fellow here to interrupt us.

(*Enter* Hardcastle.)

Hardcastle. Gentlemen, once more you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr. Marlow? Sir, you are heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire. I like to give them a hearty reception, in the old style, at my gate. I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

Marlow (*aside*). He has got our names from the servants already. (*To him.*) We approve your caution and hospitality, sir. (*To* Hastings.) I have been thinking, George, of changing our travelling dresses in the morning. I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.

Hardcastle. I beg, Mr. Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house.

Hastings. I fancy, [Charles,] you're right; the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with the white and gold.

Hardcastle. Mr. Marlow — Mr. Hastings — gentlemen, pray be under no restraint in this house. This is Liberty-hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please here.

Marlow. Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat.

Hardcastle. Your talking of a retreat, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when we went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison —

Marlow. Don't you think the *ventre d'or* waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

Hardcastle. He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men —

Hastings. I think not: brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

Hardcastle. I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men —

Marlow. The girls like finery.

Hardcastle. Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. "Now," says the Duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him — you must have heard of George Brooks — "I'll pawn my dukedom," says he, "but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood." So —

Marlow. What, my good friend, if you gave us a glass of punch in the meantime; it would help us to carry on the siege with vigor.

Hardcastle. Punch, sir! (*Aside.*) This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with!

Marlow. Yes, sir, punch! A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable. This is Liberty-hall, you know.

Hardcastle. Here's cup, sir.

Marlow (*aside*). So this fellow, in his Liberty-hall, will only let us have just what he pleases.

Hardcastle (*taking the cup*). I hope you'll find it to your mind. I have prepared it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir? Here, Mr. Marlow, here is to our better acquaintance.
(*Drinks.*)

Marlow (*aside*). A very impudent fellow this! But he's a character, and I'll humor him a little. Sir, my service to you.
(*Drinks.*)

Hastings (*aside*). I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he's an innkeeper before he has learned to be a gentleman.

Marlow. From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country. Warm work, now and then, at elections, I suppose.

Hardcastle. No, sir, I have long given that work over. Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there is no business "for us that sell ale."

Hastings. So, then, you have no turn for politics, I find.

Hardcastle. Not in the least.

There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but, finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to amend itself. Since that, I no more trouble my head about Hyder Ally, or Ally Cawn, than about Ally Croaker. Sir, my service to you.

Hastings. So that with eating above stairs, and drinking below, with receiving your friends within, and amusing them without, you lead a good, pleasant, bustling life of it.

Hardcastle. I do stir about a great deal, that's certain. Half the differences of the parish are adjusted in this very parlor.

Marlow (*after drinking*). And you have an argument in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in Westminster-hall.

Hardcastle. Ay, young gentleman, that, and a little philosophy.

Marlow (*aside*). Well, this is the first time I ever heard of an innkeeper's philosophy.

Hastings. So, then, like an experienced general, you attack them on every quarter. If you find their reason manageable, you attack it with your philosophy; if you find they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's your health, my philosopher.

(*Drinks.*)

Hardcastle. Good, very good, thank you; ha! ha! ha! Your generalship puts me in mind of Prince Eugene, when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade. You shall hear —

Marlow. Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I believe it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your philosophy got in the house for supper?

Hardcastle. For supper, sir! (*Aside.*) Was ever such a request to a man in his own house!

Marlow. Yes, sir, supper, sir; I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make devilish work to-night in the larder, I promise you.

Hardcastle (*aside*). Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes beheld. (*To him.*) Why, really, sir, as for supper, I can't well tell. My Dorothy and the cook-maid settle these things between them. I leave these kind of things entirely to them.

Marlow. You do, do you?

Hardcastle. Entirely. By the bye, I believe they are in actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment in the kitchen.

Marlow. Then I beg they'll admit *me* as one of their privy-council. It's a way I have got. When I travel I always choose to regulate my own supper. Let the cook be called. No offence, I hope, sir.

Hardcastle. Oh, no, sir, none in the least; yet I don't know how; our Bridget, the cook-maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house.

Hastings. Let's see your list of the larder, then. I ask it as a favor. I always match my appetite to my bill of fare.

Marlow (*to* Hardcastle, *who looks at them with surprise*). Sir, he's very right, and it's my way, too.

Hardcastle. Sir, you have a right to command here. Here, Roger, bring us the bill of fare for to-night's supper; I believe it's drawn out. [*Exit* Roger.] Your manner, Mr. Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, Colonel Wallop. It was a saying of his, that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it.

Hastings (*aside*). All upon the high ropes! His uncle a colonel! We shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of peace. [*Re-enter* Roger.] But let's hear the bill of fare.

Marlow (*perusing*). What's here? For the first course; for the second course; for the dessert. The devil, sir, do you think we have brought down the whole Joiners' Company, or the Corporation of Bedford, to eat up such a supper? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do.

Hastings. But let's hear it.

Marlow (*reading*). For the first course, at the top, a pig, and prune sauce.

Hastings. Damn your pig, I say!

Marlow. And damn your prune sauce, say I!

Hardcastle. And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig with prune sauce is very good eating.

Marlow. At the bottom, a calf's tongue and brains.

Hastings. Let your brains be knocked out, my good sir; I don't like them.

Marlow. Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves. I do.

Hardcastle (*aside*). Their impudence confounds me. (*To them.*) Gentlemen, you are my guests; make what alterations you please. Is there anything else you wish to retrench, or alter, gentlemen?

Marlow. Item: a pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a Florentine, a shaking pudding, and a dish of tiff — taff — taffety cream!

Hastings. Confound your made dishes! I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at the French Ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating.

Hardcastle. I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like; but if there be anything you have a particular fancy to —

Marlow. Why, really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite, that any one part of it is full as good as another. Send us what you please. So much for supper. And now to see that our beds are aired, and properly taken care of.

Hardcastle. I entreat you'll leave all that to me. You shall not stir a step.

Marlow. Leave that to you! I protest, sir, you must excuse me; I always look to these things myself.

Hardcastle. I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head.

Marlow. You see I am resolved on it. (*Aside.*) A very troublesome fellow this, as ever I met with.

Hardcastle. Well, sir, I'm resolved at least to attend you. (*Aside.*) This may be modern modesty, but I never saw anything look so like old-fashioned impudence.

(*Exeunt* Marlow *and* Hardcastle.)

Hastings (*solus*). So I find this fellow's civilities begin to grow troublesome. But who can be angry at those assiduities which are meant to please him? Ha! what do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

(*Enter* Miss Neville.)

Miss Neville. My dear Hastings! To what unexpected good fortune, to what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting?

Hastings. Rather let me ask the same question, as I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn.

Miss Neville. An inn! sure you mistake! My aunt, my guardian, lives here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?

Hastings. My friend, Mr. Marlow, with whom I came down, and I, have been sent here as to an inn, I assure you. A young fellow, whom we accidentally met at a house hard by, directed us hither.

Miss Neville. Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks, of whom you have heard me talk so often; ha! ha! ha!

Hastings. He whom your aunt intends for you? he of whom I have such just apprehensions?

Miss Neville. You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you. You'd adore him if you knew how heartily he despises me. My aunt knows it too, and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to think she has made a conquest.

Hastings. Thou dear dissembler! You must know, my Constance, I have just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here to get admittance into the family. The horses that carried us down are now fatigued with their journey, but they'll soon be refreshed; and then, if my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall soon be landed in France, where even among slaves the laws of marriage are respected.

Miss Neville. I have often told you that, though ready to obey you, I yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance. The greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the India director, and chiefly consists in jewels. I have been for some time persuading my aunt to let me wear them. I fancy I'm very near succeeding. The instant they are put into my possession, you shall find me ready to make them and myself yours.

Hastings. Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire. In the meantime, my friend Marlow must not be let into his mistake. I know the strange reserve of his temper is such that, if abruptly informed of it, he would instantly quit the house before our plan was ripe for execution.

Miss Neville. But how shall we keep him in the deception? Miss Hardcastle is just returned from walking; what if we still continue to deceive him? — This, this way —

(*They confer.*)

(*Enter* Marlow.)

Marlow. The assiduities of these good people tease me beyond bearing. My host seems to think it ill manners to leave me alone, and so he claps not only himself but his old-fashioned wife on my back. They talk of coming to sup with us too; and then, I suppose, we are to run the gauntlet through all the rest of the family. — What have we got here?

Hastings. My dear Charles! Let me congratulate you! The most fortunate accident! Who do you think is just alighted?

Marlow. Cannot guess.

Hastings. Our mistresses, boy, Miss Hardcastle and Miss Neville. Give me leave to introduce Miss Constance Neville to your acquaintance. Happening to dine in the neighborhood, they called on their return to take fresh horses here. Miss Hardcastle has just stepped into the next room, and will be back in an instant. Wasn't it lucky? eh!

Marlow (*aside*). I have just been mortified enough of all conscience, and here comes something to complete my embarrassment.

Hastings. Well, but wasn't it the most fortunate thing in the world?

Marlow. Oh, yes. Very fortunate — a most joyful encounter — But our dresses, George, you know, are in disorder — What if we should postpone the happiness till to-morrow? — to-morrow at her own house — It will be every bit as convenient — and rather more respectful — To-morrow let it be. (*Offering to go.*)

Hastings. By no means, sir. Your ceremony will displease her. The disorder of your dress will show the ardor of your impatience. Besides, she knows you are in the house, and will permit you to see her.

Marlow. Oh, the devil! how shall I support it? Hem! hem! Hastings, you must not go. You are to assist me, you know. I shall be confoundedly ridiculous. Yet, hang it, I'll take courage! Hem!

Hastings. Pshaw, man! it's but the first plunge, and all's over! She's but a woman, you know.

Marlow. And of all women, she that I dread most to encounter!

(*Enter* Miss Hardcastle, *as returned from walking, a bonnet, &c.*)

Hastings (*introducing them*). Miss Hardcastle, Mr. Marlow; I'm proud of bringing two persons of such merit together, that only want to know, to esteem each other.

Miss Hardcastle (*aside*). Now for meeting my modest gentleman with a demure face, and quite in his own manner. (*After a pause, in which he appears very uneasy and disconcerted.*) I'm glad of your safe arrival, sir. I'm told you had some accidents by the way.

Marlow. Only a few, madam. Yes, we had some. Yes, madam, a good many accidents, but should be sorry — madam — or rather glad of any accidents — that are so agreeably concluded. Hem!

Hastings (*to him*). You never spoke better in your whole life. Keep it up, and I'll insure you the victory.

Miss Hardcastle. I'm afraid you flatter, sir. You that have seen so much of the finest company, can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country.

Marlow (*gathering courage*). I have lived, indeed, in the world, madam; but I have kept very little company. I have been but an observer upon life, madam, while others were enjoying it.

Miss Neville. But that, I am told, is the way to enjoy it at last.

Hastings (*to him*). Cicero never spoke better. Once more, and you are confirmed in assurance for ever.

Marlow (*to him*). Hem! stand by me then, and when I'm down, throw in a word or two to set me up again.

Miss Hardcastle. An observer, like you, upon life, were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure than to approve.

Marlow. Pardon me, madam. I was always willing to be amused. The folly of most people is rather an object of mirth than uneasiness.

Hastings (*to him*). Bravo, bravo. Never spoke so well in your whole life. Well, Miss Hardcastle, I see that you and Mr. Marlow are going to be very good company. I believe our being here will but embarrass the interview.

Marlow. Not in the least, Mr. Hastings. We like your company of all things. (*To him.*) Zounds, George, sure you won't go? How can you leave us?

Hastings. Our presence will but spoil conversation, so we'll retire to the next room. (*To him.*) You don't consider, man, that we are to manage a little *tête-à-tête* of our own.

(*Exeunt* [Hastings *with* Miss Neville].)

Miss Hardcastle (*after a pause*). But you have not been wholly an observer, I presume, sir. The ladies, I should hope, have employed some part of your addresses.

Marlow (*relapsing into timidity*). Pardon me, madam, I — I — I — as yet have studied — only — to — deserve them.

Miss Hardcastle. And that, some say, is the very worst way to obtain them.

Marlow. Perhaps so, madam. But I love to converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex. — But I'm afraid I grow tiresome.

Miss Hardcastle. Not at all, sir; there is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself; I could hear it for ever. Indeed I have often been surprised how a man of sentiment could ever admire those light, airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart.

Marlow. It's — a disease — of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes there must be some who, wanting a relish — for — um — a — um —

Miss Hardcastle. I understand you, sir. There must be some who, wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting.

Marlow. My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed. And I can't help observing — a —

Miss Hardcastle (*aside*). Who could ever suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions! (*To him.*) You were going to observe, sir, —

Marlow. I was observing, madam — I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe.

Miss Hardcastle (*aside*). I vow and so do I. (*To him.*) You were observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy, — something about hypocrisy, sir.

Marlow. Yes, madam. In this age of hypocrisy there are few who, upon strict inquiry, do not — a — a —

Miss Hardcastle. I understand you perfectly, sir.

Marlow (*aside*). Egad! and that's more than I do myself!

Miss Hardcastle. You mean that in this hypocritical age there are few who do not condemn in public what they practice in private; and think they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it.

Marlow. True, madam; those who have most virtue in their mouths have least of it in their bosoms. But I'm sure I tire you, madam.

Miss Hardcastle. Not in the least, sir; there's something so agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force, — pray, sir, go on.

Marlow. Yes, madam, I was saying — that there are some occasions — when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the — and puts us — upon — a — a — a —

Miss Hardcastle. I agree with you entirely; a want of courage upon some occasions, assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most want to excel. I beg you'll proceed.

Marlow. Yes, madam. Morally speaking, madam — But I see Miss Neville expecting us in the next room. I would not intrude for the world.

Miss Hardcastle. I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably entertained in all my life. Pray go on.

Marlow. Yes, madam, I was — But she beckons us to join her. Madam, shall I do myself the honor to attend you?

Miss Hardcastle. Well, then, I'll follow.

Marlow (*aside*). This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me.

(*Exit.*)

Miss Hardcastle (*sola*). Ha! ha! ha! Was there ever such a sober, sentimental interview? I'm certain he scarce looked in my face the whole time. Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is pretty well, too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears, that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service. But who is that somebody? That, faith, is a question I can scarce answer. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* Tony *and* Miss Neville, *followed by* Mrs. Hardcastle *and* Hastings.)

Tony. What do you follow me for, cousin Con? I wonder you're not ashamed to be so very engaging.

Miss Neville. I hope, cousin, one may speak to one's own relations, and not be to blame.

Tony. Ay, but I know what sort of a relation you want to make me, though; but it won't do. I tell you, cousin Con, it won't do; so I beg you'll keep your distance. I want no nearer relationship.

(*She follows, coquetting him to the back scene.*)

Mrs. Hardcastle. Well, I vow, Mr. Hastings, you are very entertaining. There's nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London, and the fashions, though I was never there myself.

Hastings. Never there! You amaze me! From your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranelagh, St. James's, or Tower Wharf.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Oh, sir, you're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. I'm in love with the town, and that serves to raise me above some of our neighboring rustics; but who can have a manner, that has never seen the Pantheon, the Grotto Gardens, the Borough, and such places, where the nobility chiefly resort? All I can do is to enjoy London at second-hand. I take care to know every *tête-à-tête* from the *Scandalous Magazine*, and have all the fashions, as they come out, in a letter from the two Miss Rickets of Crooked-lane. Pray, how do you like this head, Mr. Hastings?

Hastings. Extremely elegant and *degagée*, upon my word, madam. Your friseur is a Frenchman, I suppose?

Mrs. Hardcastle. I protest, I dressed it myself from a print in the *Ladies' Memorandum-book* for the last year.

Hastings. Indeed! Such a head in a side-box, at the play-house, would draw as many gazers as my Lady Mayoress at a city ball.

Mrs. Hardcastle. I vow, since inoculation began, there is no such thing to be seen as a plain woman; so one must dress a little particular, or one may escape in the crowd.

Hastings. But that can never be your case, madam, in any dress. (*Bowing.*)

Mrs. Hardcastle. Yet what signifies my dressing, when I have such a piece of antiquity by my side as Mr. Hardcastle? All I can say will never argue down a single button from his clothes. I have often wanted him to throw off his great flaxen wig, and where he was bald to plaster it over, like my Lord Pately, with powder.

Hastings. You are right, madam; for, as among the ladies there are none ugly, so among the men there are none old.

Mrs. Hardcastle. But what do you think his answer was? Why, with his usual Gothic vivacity, he said I only wanted him to throw off his wig to convert it into a *tête* for my own wearing.

Hastings. Intolerable! At your age you may wear what you please, and it must become you.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Pray, Mr. Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town?

Hastings. Some time ago forty was all the mode; but I'm told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Seriously? Then I shall be too young for the fashion.

Hastings. No lady begins now to put on jewels till she's past forty. For instance, Miss there, in a polite circle, would be considered as a child, as a mere maker of samplers.

Mrs. Hardcastle. And yet, Mistress Niece thinks herself as much a woman, and is as fond of jewels, as the oldest of us all.

Hastings. Your niece, is she? And that young gentleman, — a brother of yours, I should presume?

Mrs. Hardcastle. My son, sir. They are contracted to each other. Observe their little sports. They fall in and out ten times a day, as if they were man and wife already. (*To them.*) Well, Tony, child, what soft things are you saying to your cousin Constance this evening?

Tony. I have been saying no soft things; but that it's very hard to be followed about so. Ecod! I've not a place in the house now that's left to myself, but the stable.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Never mind him, Con, my dear. He's in another story behind your back.

Miss Neville. There's something generous in my cousin's manner. He falls out before faces, to be forgiven in private.

Tony. That's a damned confounded — crack.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Ah, he's a sly one! Don't you think they're like each other about the mouth, Mr. Hastings? The Blenkinsop mouth to a T. They're of a size, too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr. Hastings may see you. Come, Tony.

Tony. You had as good not make me, I tell you.

(*Measuring.*)

Miss Neville. Oh, lud! he has almost cracked my head.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Oh, the monster! For shame, Tony. You a man, and behave so!

Tony. If I'm a man, let me have my fortin. Ecod, I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Is this, ungrateful boy, all that I'm to get for the pains I have taken in your education? I that have rocked you in your cradle, and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon! Did not I work that waistcoat to make you genteel? Did not I prescribe for you every day, and weep while the receipt was operating?

Tony. Ecod! you had reason to weep, for you have been dosing me ever since I was born. I have gone through every receipt in *The Complete Huswife* ten times over; and you have thoughts of coursing me through *Quincy* next spring. But, Ecod! I tell you, I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Wasn't it all for your good, viper? Wasn't it all for your good?

Tony. I wish you'd let me and my good alone, then. Snubbing this way when I'm in spirits! If I'm to have any good, let it come of itself; not to keep dinging it, dinging it into one so.

Mrs. Hardcastle. That's false; I never see you when you're in spirits. No, Tony, you then go to the alehouse or kennel. I'm never to be delighted with your agreeable wild notes, unfeeling monster!

Tony. Ecod! mamma, your own notes are the wildest of the two.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Was ever the like? But I see he wants to break my heart; I see he does.

Hastings. Dear madam, permit me to lecture the young gentleman a little. I'm certain I can persuade him to his duty.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Well, I must retire. Come, Constance, my love. You see, Mr. Hastings, the wretchedness of my situation. Was ever poor woman so plagued with a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, undutiful boy?

(*Exeunt* Mrs. Hardcastle *and* Miss Neville.)

Tony (*singing*). *There was a young man riding by, and fain would have his will. Rang do didlo dee.* — Don't mind her. Let her cry. It's the comfort of her heart. I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an hour together; and they said they liked the book the better the more it made them cry.

Hastings. Then you're no friend to the ladies, I find, my pretty young gentleman?

Tony. That's as I find 'um.

Hastings. Not to her of your mother's choosing, I dare answer? And she appears to me a pretty, well-tempered girl.

Tony. That's because you don't know her as well as I. Ecod! I know every inch about her; and there's not a more bitter, cantanckerous toad in all Christendom.

Hastings (*aside*). Pretty encouragement, this, for a lover.

Tony. I have seen her since the height of that. She has as many tricks as a hare in a thicket, or a colt the first day's breaking.

Hastings. To me she appears sensible and silent.

Tony. Ay, before company. But when she's with her playmates, she's as loud as a hog in a gate.

Hastings. But there is a meek modesty about her that charms me.

Tony. Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up, and you're flung in a ditch.

Hastings. Well, but you must allow her a little beauty. — Yes, you must allow her some beauty.

Tony. Bandbox! She's all a made-up thing, mun. Ah! could you but see Bet Bouncer of these parts, you might then talk of beauty. Ecod! she has two eyes as black as sloes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion. She'd make two of she.

Hastings. Well, what say you to a friend that would take this bitter bargain off your hands?

Tony. Anan!

Hastings. Would you thank him that would take Miss Neville, and leave you to happiness and your dear Betsy?

Tony. Ay; but where is there such a friend, for who would take *her?*

Hastings. I am he. If you but assist me, I'll engage to whip her off to France, and you shall never hear more of her.

Tony. Assist you! Ecod I will, to the last drop of my blood. I'll clap a pair of horses to your chaise that shall trundle you off in a twinkling, and may be get you a part of her fortin besides, in jewels, that you little dream of.

Hastings. My dear Squire, this looks like a lad of spirit.

Tony. Come along then, and you shall see more of my spirit before you have done with me.

(*Singing.*)

We are the boys
That fears no noise
Where the thundering cannons roar.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT III.

[Scene — *The house.*]

(*Enter* Hardcastle *solus.*)

Hardcastle. What could my old friend Sir Charles mean by recommending his son as the modestest young man in town? To me he appears the most impudent piece of brass that ever spoke with a tongue. He has taken possession of the easy chair by the fire-side already. He took off his boots in the parlor, and desired me to see them taken care of. I'm desirous to know how his impudence affects my daughter. She will certainly be shocked at it.

(*Enter* Miss Hardcastle, *plainly dressed.*)

Hardcastle. Well, my Kate, I see you have changed your dress, as I bid you; and yet, I believe, there was no great occasion.

Miss Hardcastle. I find such a pleasure, sir, in obeying your commands, that I take care to observe them without ever debating their propriety.

HARDCASTLE. And yet, Kate, I sometimes give you some cause, particularly when I recommended my *modest* gentleman to you as a lover to-day.

MISS HARDCASTLE. You taught me to expect something extraordinary, and I find the original exceeds the description.

HARDCASTLE. I was never so surprised in my life! He has quite confounded all my faculties.

MISS HARDCASTLE. I never saw anything like it; and a man of the world, too!

HARDCASTLE. Ay, he learned it all abroad; what a fool was I, to think a young man could learn modesty by travelling. He might as soon learn wit at a masquerade.

MISS HARDCASTLE. It seems all natural to him.

HARDCASTLE. A good deal assisted by bad company and a French dancing-master.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Sure, you mistake, papa. A French dancing-master could never have taught him that timid look — that awkward address — that bashful manner.

HARDCASTLE. Whose look, whose manner, child?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Mr. Marlow's: his *mauvaise honte*, his timidity, struck me at the first sight.

HARDCASTLE. Then your first sight deceived you; for I think him one of the most brazen first sights that ever astonished my senses.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Sure, sir, you rally! I never saw any one so modest.

HARDCASTLE. And can you be serious! I never saw such a bouncing, swaggering puppy since I was born. Bully Dawson was but a fool to him.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Surprising! He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

HARDCASTLE. He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze again.

MISS HARDCASTLE. He treated me with diffidence and respect; censured the manners of the age; admired the prudence of girls that never laughed; tired me with apologies for being tiresome; then left the room with a bow, and "Madam, I would not for the world detain you."

HARDCASTLE. He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before; asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer; interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun; and when I was in my best story of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, he asked if I had not a good hand at making punch. Yes, Kate, he asked your father if he was a maker of punch!

MISS HARDCASTLE. One of us must certainly be mistaken.

HARDCASTLE. If he be what he has shown himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent.

MISS HARDCASTLE. And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine.

HARDCASTLE. In one thing then we are agreed — to reject him.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Yes — but upon conditions. For if you should find him less impudent, and I more presuming; if you find him more respectful, and I more importunate — I don't know — the fellow is well enough for a man — Certainly we don't meet many such at a horse-race in the country.

HARDCASTLE. If we should find him so — But that's impossible. The first appearance has done my business. I'm seldom deceived in that.

MISS HARDCASTLE. And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance.

HARDCASTLE. Ay, when a girl finds a fellow's outside to her taste, she then sets about guessing the rest of his furniture. With her a smooth face stands for good sense, and a genteel figure for every virtue.

MISS HARDCASTLE. I hope, sir, a conversation begun with a compliment to my good sense, won't end with a sneer at my understanding!

HARDCASTLE. Pardon me, Kate. But if young Mr. Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions, he may please us both, perhaps.

MISS HARDCASTLE. And as one of us

must be mistaken, what if we go to make farther discoveries?

Hardcastle. Agreed. But depend on't, I'm in the right.

Miss Hardcastle. And, depend on't, I'm not much in the wrong. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter* Tony, *running in with a casket.*)

Tony. Ecod! I have got them. Here they are. My cousin Con's necklaces, bobs and all. My mother shan't cheat the poor souls out of their fortin neither. Oh! my genus, is that you?

(*Enter* Hastings.)

Hastings. My dear friend, how have you managed with your mother? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for your cousin, and that you are willing to be reconciled at last? Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off.

Tony. And here's something to bear your charges by the way (*giving the casket*); — your sweetheart's jewels. Keep them; and hang those, I say, that would rob you of one of them!

Hastings. But how have you procured them from your mother?

Tony. Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no fibs. I procured them by the rule of thumb. If I had not a key to every drawer in my mother's bureau, how could I go to the alehouse so often as I do? An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time.

Hastings. Thousands do it every day. But, to be plain with you, Miss Neville is endeavoring to procure them from her aunt this very instant. If she succeeds, it will be the most delicate way, at least, of obtaining them.

Tony. Well, keep them, till you know how it will be. But I know how it will be well enough; she'd as soon part with the only sound tooth in her head.

Hastings. But I dread the effects of her resentment when she finds she has lost them.

Tony. Never you mind her resentment; leave *me* to manage that. I don't value her resentment the bounce of a cracker. Zounds! here they are! Morrice! Prance! (*Exit* Hastings.)

([*Enter*] Mrs. Hardcastle *and* Miss Neville.)

Mrs. Hardcastle. Indeed, Constance, you amaze me. Such a girl as you want jewels? It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, twenty years hence, when your beauty begins to want repairs.

Miss Neville. But what will repair beauty at forty, will certainly improve it at twenty, madam.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Yours, my dear, can admit of none. That natural blush is beyond a thousand ornaments. Besides, child, jewels are quite out at present. Don't you see half the ladies of our acquaintance, my Lady Kill-day-light, and Mrs. Crump, and the rest of them, carry their jewels to town, and bring nothing but paste and marcasites back?

Miss Neville. But who knows, madam, but somebody that shall be nameless would like me best with all my little finery about me?

Mrs. Hardcastle. Consult your glass, my dear, and then see if, with such a pair of eyes, you want any better sparklers. What do you think, Tony, my dear? Does your cousin Con want any jewels, in your eyes, to set off her beauty?

Tony. That's as hereafter may be.

Miss Neville. My dear aunt, if you knew how it would oblige me.

Mrs. Hardcastle. A parcel of old-fashioned rose and table-cut things. They would make you look like the court of King Solomon at a puppet-show. Besides, I believe I can't readily come at them. They may be missing, for aught I know to the contrary.

Tony (*apart to* Mrs. Hardcastle). Then why don't you tell her so at once, as she's so longing for them? Tell her they're lost. It's the only way to quiet her. Say they're lost, and call me to bear witness.

Mrs. Hardcastle (*apart to* Tony). You know, my dear, I'm only keeping them for you. So if I say they're gone, you'll bear me witness, will you? He! he! he!

Tony. Never fear me. Ecod! I'll say

I saw them taken out with my own eyes.

MISS NEVILLE. I desire them but for a day, madam, just to be permitted to show them as relics, and then they may be locked up again.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. To be plain with you, my dear Constance, if I could find them you should have them. They're missing, I assure you. Lost, for aught I know; but we must have patience, wherever they are.

MISS NEVILLE. I'll not believe it; this is but a shallow pretence to deny me. I know they are too valuable to be so slightly kept, and as you are to answer for the loss —

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Don't be alarmed, Constance. If they be lost, I must restore an equivalent. But my son knows they are missing, and not to be found.

TONY. That I can bear witness to. They are missing, and not to be found; I'll take my oath on't.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. You must learn resignation, my dear; for though we lose our fortune, yet we should not lose our patience. See me, how calm I am.

MISS NEVILLE. Ay, people are generally calm at the misfortunes of others.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Now, I wonder a girl of your good sense should waste a thought upon such trumpery. We shall soon find them; and in the mean time you shall make use of my garnets till your jewels be found.

MISS NEVILLE. I detest garnets!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. The most becoming things in the world to set off a clear complexion. You have often seen how well they look upon me. You *shall* have them. (*Exit.*)

MISS NEVILLE. I dislike them of all things. — You shan't stir. Was ever anything so provoking, — to mislay my own jewels, and force me to wear her trumpery?

TONY. Don't be a fool. If she gives you the garnets take what you can get. The jewels are your own already. I have stolen them out of her bureau, and she does not know it. Fly to your spark; he'll tell you more of the matter. Leave me to manage *her*.

MISS NEVILLE. My dear cousin!

TONY. Vanish. She's here, and has missed them already. (*Exit* MISS NEVILLE.) Zounds! how she fidgets and spits about like a Catherine wheel.

(*Enter* MRS. HARDCASTLE.)

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Confusion! thieves! robbers! we are cheated, plundered, broke open, undone!

TONY. What's the matter, what's the matter, mamma? I hope nothing has happened to any of the good family?

MRS. HARDCASTLE. We are robbed. My bureau has been broke open, the jewels taken out, and I'm undone!

TONY. Oh! is that all! Ha! ha! ha! By the laws, I never saw it better acted in my life. Ecod, I thought you was ruined in earnest, ha, ha, ha!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Why, boy, I *am* ruined in earnest. My bureau has been broke open, and all taken away.

TONY. Stick to that; ha, ha, ha! stick to that. I'll bear witness, you know! call me to bear witness.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. I tell you, Tony, by all that's precious, the jewels are gone, and I shall be ruined forever.

TONY. Sure I know they are gone, and I am to say so.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. My dearest Tony, but hear me. They're gone, I say.

TONY. By the laws, mamma, you make me for to laugh, ha! ha! I know who took them well enough, ha! ha! ha!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Was there ever such a blockhead, that can't tell the difference between jest and earnest? I can tell you I'm not in jest, booby.

TONY. That's right, that's right! You must be in a bitter passion, and then nobody will suspect either of us. I'll bear witness that they are gone.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Was there ever such a cross-grained brute, that won't hear me? Can you bear witness that you're no better than a fool? Was ever poor woman so beset with fools on one hand, and thieves on the other?

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Bear witness again, you blockhead, you, and I'll turn you out of the room directly. My poor niece, what will become of *her?* Do you laugh, you unfeeling brute, as if you enjoyed my distress?

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Do you insult me, monster. I'll teach you to vex your mother, I will!

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

(*He runs off; she follows him.*)

(*Enter* Miss Hardcastle *and Maid.*)

Miss Hardcastle. What an unaccountable creature is that brother of mine, to send them to the house as an inn; ha! ha! I don't wonder at his impudence.

Maid. But what is more, madam, the young gentleman, as you passed by in your present dress, asked me if you were the bar-maid. He mistook you for the bar-maid, madam!

Miss Hardcastle. Did he? Then, as I live, I'm resolved to keep up the delusion. Tell me, Pimple, how do you like my present dress? Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the *Beaux' Stratagem?*

Maid. It's the dress, madam, that every lady wears in the country, but when she visits or receives company.

Miss Hardcastle. And are you sure he does not remember my face or person?

Maid. Certain of it.

Miss Hardcastle. I vow I thought so; for though we spoke for some time together, yet his fears were such that he never once looked up during the interview. Indeed, if he had, my bonnet would have kept him from seeing me.

Maid. But what do you hope from keeping him in his mistake?

Miss Hardcastle. In the first place, I shall be *seen*, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market. Then I shall perhaps make an acquaintance, and that's no small victory gained over one who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex. But my chief aim is to take my gentleman off his guard, and, like an invisible champion of romance, examine the giant's force before I offer to combat.

Maid. But are you sure you can act your part, and disguise your voice so that he may mistake that, as he has already mistaken your person?

Miss Hardcastle. Never fear me. I think I have got the true bar cant — Did your honor call? — Attend the Lion there. — Pipes and tobacco for the Angel. — The Lamb has been outrageous this half hour!

Maid. It will do, madam. But he's here. (*Exit Maid.*)

(*Enter* Marlow.)

Marlow. What a bawling in every part of the house; I have scarce a moment's repose. If I go to the best room, there I find my host and his story; if I fly to the gallery, there we have my hostess with her curtsey down to the ground. I have at last got a moment to myself, and now for recollection. (*Walks and muses.*)

Miss Hardcastle. Did you call, sir? Did your honor call?

Marlow (*musing*). As for Miss Hardcastle, she's too grave and sentimental for me.

Miss Hardcastle. Did your honor call?

(*She still places herself before him, he turning away.*)

Marlow. No, child. (*Musing.*) Besides, from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints.

Miss Hardcastle. I'm sure, sir, I heard the bell ring.

Marlow. No, no. (*Musing.*) I have pleased my father, however, by coming down, and I'll to-morrow please myself by returning.

(*Taking out his tablets and perusing.*)

Miss Hardcastle. Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir?

Marlow. I tell you no.

Miss Hardcastle. I should be glad to know, sir. We have such a parcel of servants.

Marlow. No, no, I tell you. (*Looks full in her face.*) Yes, child, I think

I did call. I wanted — I wanted — I vow, child, you are vastly handsome.

Miss Hardcastle. Oh, la, sir, you'll make one ashamed.

Marlow. Never saw a more sprightly, malicious eye. Yes, yes, my dear, I did call. Have you got any of your — a — what d'ye call it, in the house?

Miss Hardcastle. No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days.

Marlow. One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose. Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of trial, of the nectar of your lips; perhaps I might be disappointed in that too.

Miss Hardcastle. Nectar? nectar? That's a liquor there's no call for in these parts. French, I suppose. We keep no French wines here, sir.

Marlow. Of true English growth, I assure you.

Miss Hardcastle. Then it's odd I should not know it. We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years.

Marlow. Eighteen years! Why, one would think, child, you kept the bar before you were born. How old are you?

Miss Hardcastle. Oh, sir, I must not tell my age. They say women and music should never be dated.

Marlow. To guess at this distance, you can't be much above forty. (*Approaching.*) Yet nearer, I don't think so much. (*Approaching.*) By coming close to some women, they look younger still; but when we come very close indeed —

(*Attempting to kiss her.*)

Miss Hardcastle. Pray, sir, keep your distance. One would think you wanted to know one's age as they do horses, by mark of mouth.

Marlow. I protest, child, you use me extremely ill. If you keep me at this distance, how is it possible you and I can be ever acquainted?

Miss Hardcastle. And who wants to be acquainted with you? I want no such acquaintance, not I. I'm sure you did not treat Miss Hardcastle, that was here a while ago, in this obstropalous manner. I'll warrant me, before her you looked dashed, and kept bowing to the ground, and talked, for all the world, as if you was before a justice of peace.

Marlow (*aside*). Egad, she has hit it, sure enough! (*To her.*) In awe of her, child? Ha! ha! ha! A mere awkward, squinting thing! No, no. I find you don't know me. I laughed and rallied her a little; but I was unwilling to be too severe. No, I could not be too severe, curse me!

Miss Hardcastle. Oh, then, sir, you are a favorite, I find, among the ladies!

Marlow. Yes, my dear, a great favorite. And yet, hang me, I don't see what they find in me to follow. At the Ladies' Club in town I'm called their agreeable Rattle. Rattle, child, is not my real name, but one I'm known by. My name is Solomons; Mr. Solomons, my dear, at your service.

Offering to salute her.)

Miss Hardcastle. Hold, sir, you are introducing me to your club, not to yourself. And you're so great a favorite there, you say?

Marlow. Yes, my dear. There's Mrs. Mantrap, Lady Betty Blackleg, the Countess of Sligo, Mrs. Langhorns, old Miss Biddy Buckskin, and your humble servant, keep up the spirit of the place.

Miss Hardcastle. Then it's a very merry place, I suppose?

Marlow. Yes, as merry as cards, suppers, wine, and old women can make us.

Miss Hardcastle. And their agreeable Rattle, ha! ha! ha!

Marlow (*aside*). Egad! I don't quite like this chit. She looks knowing, methinks. You laugh, child?

Miss Hardcastle. I can't but laugh to think what time they all have for minding their work, or their family.

Marlow (*aside*). All's well; she don't laugh at me. (*To her.*) Do *you* ever work, child?

Miss Hardcastle. Ay, sure. There's not a screen or a quilt in the whole house but what can bear witness to that.

Marlow. Odso! then you must show me your embroidery. I embroider and draw patterns myself a little. If you want a judge of your work, you must apply to me. (*Seizing her hand.*)

[*Enter* HARDCASTLE, *who stands in surprise.*]

MISS HARDCASTLE. Ay, but the colors don't look well by candle-light. You shall see it all in the morning. (*Struggling.*)

MARLOW. And why not now, my angel? Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance. Pshaw! the father here! My old luck; I never nicked seven that I did not throw ames ace three times following. (*Exit* MARLOW.)

HARDCASTLE. So, madam! So I find *this* is your *modest* lover. This is your humble admirer, that kept his eyes fixed on the ground, and only adored at humble distance. Kate, Kate, art thou not ashamed to deceive your father so?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Never trust me, dear papa, but he's still the modest man I first took him for; you'll be convinced of it as well as I.

HARDCASTLE. By the hand of my body, I believe his impudence is infectious! Didn't I see him seize your hand? Didn't I see him haul you about like a milk-maid? And now you talk of his respect and his modesty, forsooth!

MISS HARDCASTLE. But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, I hope you'll forgive him.

HARDCASTLE. The girl would actually make one run mad! I tell you I'll not be convinced. I am convinced. He has scarcely been three hours in the house, and he has already encroached on all my prerogatives. You may like his impudence, and call it modesty; but my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Sir, I ask but this night to convince you.

HARDCASTLE. You shall not have half the time, for I have thoughts of turning him out this very hour.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Give me that hour, then, and I hope to satisfy you.

HARDCASTLE. Well, an hour let it be then. But I'll have no trifling with your father. All fair and open; do you mind me?

MISS HARDCASTLE. I hope, sir, you have ever found that I considered your commands as my pride; for your kindness is such that my duty as yet has been inclination. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

[SCENE — *The house.*]

(*Enter* HASTINGS *and* MISS NEVILLE.)

HASTINGS. You surprise me! Sir Charles Marlow expected here this night? Where have you had your information?

MISS NEVILLE. You may depend upon it. I just saw his letter to Mr. Hardcastle, in which he tells him he intends setting out a few hours after his son.

HASTINGS. Then, my Constance, all must be completed before he arrives. He knows me; and should he find me here, would discover my name, and perhaps my designs, to the rest of the family.

MISS NEVILLE. The jewels, I hope, are safe?

HASTINGS. Yes, yes. I have sent them to Marlow, who keeps the keys of our baggage. In the mean time, I'll go to prepare matters for our elopement. I have had the Squire's promise of a fresh pair of horses; and, if I should not see him again, will write him further directions. (*Exit.*)

MISS NEVILLE. Well, success attend you! In the mean time, I'll go amuse my aunt with the old pretence of a violent passion for my cousin. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* MARLOW, *followed by a Servant.*)

MARLOW. I wonder what Hastings could mean by sending me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for him, when he knows the only place I have is the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door. Have you deposited the casket with the landlady, as I ordered you? Have you put it into her own hands?

SERVANT. Yes, your honor.

MARLOW. She said she'd keep it safe, did she?

Servant. Yes; she said she'd keep it safe enough. She asked me how I came by it; and she said she had a great mind to make me give an account of myself.

(*Exit Servant.*)

Marlow. Ha! ha! ha! They're safe, however. What an unaccountable set of beings have we got amongst! This little bar-maid, though, runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the absurdities of all the rest of the family. She's mine, she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken!

(*Enter* Hastings.)

Hastings. Bless me! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to prepare at the bottom of the garden. Marlow here, and in spirits too!

Marlow. Give me joy, George! Crown me, shadow me with laurels! Well, George, after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women.

Hastings. Some women, you mean. But what success has your honor's modesty been crowned with now, that it grows so insolent upon us?

Marlow. Didn't you see the tempting, brisk, lovely little thing, that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to its girdle?

Hastings. Well, and what then?

Marlow. She's mine, you rogue, you. Such fire, such motion, such eyes, such lips — but, egad! she would not let me kiss them though.

Hastings. But are you sure, so very sure of her?

Marlow. Why, man, she talked of showing me her work above stairs, and I am to improve the pattern.

Hastings. But how can *you*, Charles, go about to rob a woman of her honor?

Marlow. Pshaw! pshaw! We all know the honor of the bar-maid of an inn. I don't intend to *rob* her, take my word for it; there's nothing in this house I shan't honestly *pay* for.

Hastings. I believe the girl has virtue.

Marlow. And if she has, I should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it.

Hastings. You have taken care, I hope, of the casket I sent you to lock up? It's in safety?

Marlow. Yes, yes; it's safe enough. I have taken care of it. But how could you think the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door a place of safety? Ah! numscull! I have taken better precautions for you than you did for yourself — I have —

Hastings. What?

Marlow. I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you.

Hastings. To the landlady!

Marlow. The landlady.

Hastings. You did?

Marlow. I did. She's to be answerable for its forthcoming, you know.

Hastings. Yes, she'll bring it forth with a witness.

Marlow. Wasn't I right? I believe you'll allow that I acted prudently upon this occasion.

Hastings (*aside*). He must not see my uneasiness.

Marlow. You seem a little disconcerted, though, methinks. Sure nothing has happened?

Hastings. No, nothing. Never was in better spirits in all my life. And so you left it with the landlady, who, no doubt, very readily undertook the charge.

Marlow. Rather too readily; for she not only kept the casket, but, through her great precaution, was going to keep the messenger too. Ha! ha! ha!

Hastings. He! he! he! They're safe, however.

Marlow. As a guinea in a miser's purse.

Hastings (*aside*). So now all hopes of fortune are at an end, and we must set off without it. (*To him.*) Well, Charles, I'll leave you to your meditations on the pretty bar-maid, and he! he! he! may you be as successful for yourself as you have been for me! (*Exit.*)

Marlow. Thank ye, George; I ask no more. — Ha! ha! ha!

(*Enter* Hardcastle.)

Hardcastle. I no longer know my own house. It's turned all topsy-turvy. His servants have got drunk already. I'll bear it no longer; and yet, from my respect for his father, I'll be calm. (*To him.*) Mr. Marlow, your servant. I'm your very humble servant. (*Bowing low.*)

Marlow. Sir, your humble servant. (*Aside.*) What's to be the wonder now?

Hardcastle. I believe, sir, you must be sensible, sir, that no man alive ought to be more welcome than your father's son, sir. I hope you think so?

Marlow. I do from my soul, sir. I don't want much entreaty. I generally make my father's son welcome wherever he goes.

Hardcastle. I believe you do, from my soul, sir. But though I say nothing to your own conduct, that of your servants is insufferable. Their manner of drinking is setting a very bad example in this house, I assure you.

Marlow. I protest, my very good sir, that is no fault of mine. If they don't drink as they ought, *they* are to blame. I ordered them not to spare the cellar; I did, I assure you. (*To the side-scene.*) Here, let one of my servants come up. (*To him.*) My positive directions were, that as I did not drink myself, they should make up for my deficiencies below.

Hardcastle. Then they had your orders for what they do? I'm satisfied!

Marlow. They had, I assure you. You shall hear from one of themselves.

(*Enter Servant, drunk.*)

Marlow. You, Jeremy! Come forward, sirrah! What were my orders? Were you not told to drink freely, and call for what you thought fit, for the good of the house?

Hardcastle (*aside*). I begin to lose my patience.

Jeremy. Please your honor, liberty and Fleet-street forever! Though I'm but a servant, I'm as good as another man. I'll drink for no man before supper, sir, damme! Good liquor will sit upon a good supper, but a good supper will not sit upon — hiccup — upon my conscience, sir.

(*Exit.*)

Marlow. You see, my old friend, the fellow is as drunk as he can possibly be. I don't know what you'd have more, unless you'd have the poor devil soused in a beer barrel.

Hardcastle. Zounds! he'll drive me distracted, if I contain myself any longer. Mr. Marlow, sir! I have submitted to your insolence for more than four hours, and I see no likelihood of its coming to an end. I'm now resolved to be master here, sir, and I desire that you and your drunken pack may leave my house directly.

Marlow. Leave your house! — Sure, you jest, my good friend? What? when I am doing what I can to please you!

Hardcastle. I tell you, sir, you don't please me; so I desire you'll leave my house.

Marlow. Sure you cannot be serious? at this time of night, and such a night? You only mean to banter me.

Hardcastle. I tell you, sir, I'm serious! and now that my passions are roused, I say this house is mine, sir; this house is mine, and I command you to leave it directly.

Marlow. Ha! ha! ha! A puddle in a storm. I shan't stir a step, I assure you. (*In a serious tone.*) This your house, fellow! It's my house. This is my house. Mine, while I choose to stay. What right have you to bid me leave this house, sir? I never met with such impudence, curse me; never in my whole life before.

Hardcastle. Nor I, confound me if ever I did! To come to my house, to call for what he likes, to turn me out of my own chair, to insult the family, to order his servants to get drunk, and then to tell me, "This house is mine, sir!" By all that's impudent, it makes me laugh. Ha! ha! ha! Pray, sir, (*bantering*) as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire-screen, and here's a pair of brazen-nosed bellows; perhaps you may take a fancy to them?

Marlow. Bring me your bill, sir; bring me your bill, and let's make no more words about it.

Hardcastle. There are a set of prints,

too. What think you of *The Rake's Progress* for your own apartment?

Marlow. Bring me your bill, I say, and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly.

Hardcastle. Then there's a mahogany table that you may see your face in.

Marlow. My bill, I say.

Hardcastle. I had forgot the great chair for your own particular slumbers, after a hearty meal.

Marlow. Zounds! bring me my bill, I say, and let's hear no more on't.

Hardcastle. Young man, young man, from your father's letter to me, I was taught to expect a well-bred, modest man as a visitor here, but now I find him no better than a coxcomb and a bully; but he will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it. (*Exit.*)

Marlow. How's this! Sure I have not mistaken the house? Everything looks like an inn; the servants cry "coming"; the attendance is awkward; the bar-maid, too, to attend us. But she's here, and will further inform me. Whither so fast, child? A word with you.

(*Enter* Miss Hardcastle.)

Miss Hardcastle. Let it be short, then. I'm in a hurry. (*Aside.*) I believe he begins to find out his mistake. But it's too soon quite to undeceive him.

Marlow. Pray, child, answer me one question. What are you, and what may your business in this house be?

Miss Hardcastle. A relation of the family, sir.

Marlow. What! a poor relation?

Miss Hardcastle. Yes, sir, a poor relation, appointed to keep the keys, and to see that the guests want nothing in my power to give them.

Marlow. That is, you act as the barmaid of this inn.

Miss Hardcastle. Inn! O law — what brought that into your head? One of the best families in the county keep an inn! — Ha! ha! ha! old Mr. Hardcastle's house an inn!

Marlow. Mr. Hardcastle's house! Is this house Mr. Hardcastle's house, child?

Miss Hardcastle. Ay, sure. Whose else should it be?

Marlow. So, then, all's out, and I have been damnably imposed on. Oh, confound my stupid head, I shall be laughed at over the whole town! I shall be stuck up in caricatura in all the print-shops. The *Dullissimo-Macaroni.* To mistake this house of all others for an inn, and my father's old friend for an inn-keeper! What a swaggering puppy must he take me for! What a silly puppy do I find myself! There, again, may I be hanged, my dear, but I mistook you for the bar-maid.

Miss Hardcastle. Dear me! dear me! I'm sure there's nothing in my *behavour* to put me upon a level with one of that stamp.

Marlow. Nothing, my dear, nothing. But I was in for a list of blunders, and could not help making you a subscriber. My stupidity saw everything the wrong way. I mistook your assiduity for assurance, and your simplicity for allurement. But it's over — this house I no more show *my* face in.

Miss Hardcastle. I hope, sir, I have done nothing to disoblige you. I'm sure I should be sorry to affront any gentleman who has been so polite, and said so many civil things to me. I'm sure I should be sorry (*pretending to cry*) if he left the family upon my account. I'm sure I should be sorry people said anything amiss, since I have no fortune but my character.

Marlow (*aside*). By Heaven! she weeps! This is the first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman, and it touches me. (*To her.*) Excuse me, my lovely girl; you are the only part of the family I leave with reluctance. But, to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune, and education, make an honorable connection impossible; and I can never harbor a thought of seducing simplicity that trusted in my honor, or bringing ruin upon one whose only fault was being too lovely.

Miss Hardcastle (*aside*). Generous man! I now begin to admire him. (*To *him.*) But I am sure my family is as good as Miss Hardcastle's; and though I'm poor, that's no great misfortune to a contented mind; and, until this moment, I never thought that it was bad to want fortune.

Marlow. And why now, my pretty simplicity?

Miss Hardcastle. Because it puts me at a distance from one, that, if I had a thousand pound, I would give it all to.

Marlow (*aside*). This simplicity bewitches me so, that if I stay I'm undone. I must make one bold effort and leave her. (*To her.*) Your partiality in my favor, my dear, touches me most sensibly; and were I to live for myself alone, I could easily fix my choice. But I owe too much to the opinion of the world, too much to the authority of a father; so that — I can scarcely speak it — it affects me! Farewell.

(*Exit.*)

Miss Hardcastle. I never knew half his merit till now. He shall not go if I have power or art to detain him. I'll still preserve the character in which I *stooped to conquer*, but will undeceive my papa, who, perhaps, may laugh him out of his resolution.

(*Exit.*)

(*Enter* Tony *and* Miss Neville.)

Tony. Ay, you may steal for yourselves the next time. I have done my duty. She has got the jewels again, that's a sure thing; but she believes it was all a mistake of the servants.

Miss Neville. But, my dear cousin, sure you won't forsake us in this distress? If she in the least suspects that I am going off, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my aunt Pedigree's, which is ten times worse.

Tony. To be sure, aunts of all kinds are damned bad things. But what can I do? I have got you a pair of horses that will fly like Whistle Jacket; and I'm sure you can't say but I have courted you nicely before her face. Here she comes; we must court a bit or two more, for fear she should suspect us.

(*They retire and seem to fondle.*)

(*Enter* Mrs. Hardcastle.)

Mrs. Hardcastle. Well, I was greatly fluttered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was all a mistake of the servants. I shan't be easy, however, till they are fairly married, and then let her keep her own fortune. But what do I see? Fondling together, as I'm alive. I never saw Tony so sprightly before. Ah! have I caught you, my pretty doves? What, billing, exchanging stolen glances, and broken murmurs? Ah!

Tony. As for murmurs, mother, we grumble a little now and then, to be sure. But there's no love lost between us.

Mrs. Hardcastle. A mere sprinkling, Tony, upon the flame, only to make it burn brighter.

Miss Neville. Cousin Tony promises to give us more of his company at home. Indeed, he shan't leave us any more. It won't leave us, Cousin Tony, will it?

Tony. Oh, it's a pretty creature! No, I'd sooner leave my horse in a pound, than leave you when you smile upon one so. Your laugh makes you so becoming.

Miss Neville. Agreeable cousin! Who can help admiring that natural humor, that pleasant, broad, red, thoughtless (*patting his cheek*), — ah! it's a bold face!

Mrs. Hardcastle. Pretty innocence.

Tony. I'm sure I always loved cousin Con's hazel eyes, and her pretty long fingers, that she twists this way and that over the haspicholls, like a parcel of bobbins.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Ah! he would charm the bird from the tree. I was never so happy before. My boy takes after his father, poor Mr. Lumpkin, exactly. The jewels, my dear Con, shall be yours incontinently. You shall have them. Is'nt he a sweet boy, my dear. You shall be married to-morrow, and we'll put off the rest of his education, like Dr. Drowsy's sermons, to a fitter opportunity.

(*Enter* Diggory.)

Diggory. Where's the Squire? I have got a letter for your worship.

TONY. Give it to my mamma. She reads all my letters first.

DIGGORY. I had orders to deliver it into your own hands.

TONY. Who does it come from?

DIGGORY. Your worship mun ask that o' the letter itself. [*Exit* DIGGORY.]

TONY. I could wish to know, though.

(*Turning the letter, and gazing on it.*)

MISS NEVILLE (*aside*). Undone, undone! A letter to him from Hastings. I know the hand. If my aunt sees it, we are ruined forever. I'll keep her employed a little if I can. (*To* MRS. HARDCASTLE.) But I have not told you, madam, of my cousin's smart answer just now to Mr. Marlow. We so laughed — you must know, madam — this way a little, for he must not hear us.

(*They confer.*)

TONY (*still gazing*). A damned cramp piece of penmanship as ever I saw in my life. I can read your print-hand very well; but here there are such handles, and shanks, and dashes, that one can scarce tell the head from the tail. *To Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire.* It's very odd, I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough. But when I come to open it, it's all — buzz. That's hard, very hard; for the inside of the letter is always the cream of the correspondence.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Ha! ha! ha! Very well, very well. And so my son was too hard for the philosopher.

MISS NEVILLE. Yes, madam; but you must hear the rest, madam. A little more this way, or he may hear us. You'll hear how he puzzled him again.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. He seems strangely puzzled now himself, methinks.

TONY (*still gazing*). A damned up-and-down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor. (*Reading.*) *Dear Sir,* — Ay, that's that. Then there's an *M*, and a *T*, and an *S*, but whether the next be an *izzard* or an *R*, confound me, I cannot tell!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. What's that, my dear; can I give you any assistance?

MISS NEVILLE. Pray, aunt, let me read it. Nobody reads a cramp hand better than I. (*Twitching the letter from her.*) Do you know who it is from?

TONY. Can't tell, except from Dick Ginger, the feeder.

MISS NEVILLE. Ay, so it is. (*Pretending to read.*) DEAR SQUIRE, Hoping that you're in health, as I am at this present. The gentlemen of the Shake-bag club has cut the gentlemen of the Goose-green quite out of feather. The odds — um — odd battle — um — long fighting — um — here, here, it's all about cocks, and fighting; it's of no consequence; here, put it up, put it up.

(*Thrusting the crumpled letter upon him.*)

TONY. But I tell you, miss, it's of all the consequence in the world! I would not lose the rest of it for a guinea. Here, mother, do you make it out. Of no consequence!

(*Giving* MRS. HARDCASTLE *the letter.*)

MRS. HARDCASTLE. How's this? (*Reads.*) *Dear Squire, I'm now waiting for Miss Neville with a postchaise and pair, at the bottom of the garden, but I find my horses yet unable to perform the journey. I expect you'll assist us with a pair of fresh horses, as you promised. Despatch is necessary, as the hag* — ay, the hag — *your mother, will otherwise suspect us. Yours, Hastings.* Grant me patience. I shall run distracted! My rage chokes me!

MISS NEVILLE. I hope, madam, you'll suspend your resentment for a few moments, and not impute to me any impertinence, or sinister design, that belongs to another.

MRS. HARDCASTLE (*curtseying very low*). Fine spoken, madam; you are most miraculously polite and engaging, and quite the very pink of courtesy and circumspection, madam. (*Changing her tone.*) And you, you great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep your mouth shut, — were you too joined against me? But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment. As for you, madam, since you have got a pair of fresh horses ready, it would be cruel to disappoint them. So, if you please, instead of running away with your spark, prepare, this very moment, to run off with *me*. Your old Aunt Pedigree will keep you secure, I'll warrant me. You, too, sir, may mount your horse, and guard us upon the way. Here, Thomas, Roger, Diggory! I'll show you that I wish you better than you do yourselves.

(*Exit.*)

Miss Neville. So, now I'm completely ruined.

Tony. Ay, that's a sure thing.

Miss Neville. What better could be expected from being connected with such a stupid fool, — and after all the nods and signs I made him!

Tony. By the laws, miss, it was your own cleverness, and not my stupidity, that did your business. You were so nice and so busy with your Shake-bags and Goose-greens that I thought you could never be making believe.

(*Enter* Hastings.)

Hastings. So, sir, I find by my servant that you have shown my letter, and betrayed us. Was this well done, young gentleman?

Tony. Here's another. Ask miss, there, who betrayed you. Ecod! it was her doing, not mine.

(*Enter* Marlow.)

Marlow. So, I have been finely used here among you. Rendered contemptible, driven into ill-manners, despised, insulted, laughed at.

Tony. Here's another. We shall have old Bedlam broke loose presently.

Miss Neville. And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we all owe every obligation.

Marlow. What can I say to him? A mere boy, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection.

Hastings. A poor, contemptible booby, that would but disgrace correction.

Miss Neville. Yet with cunning and malice enough to make himself merry with all our embarrassments.

Hastings. An insensible cub.

Marlow. Replete with tricks and mischief.

Tony. Baw! damme, but I'll fight you both, one after the other, — with baskets.

Marlow. As for him, he's below resentment. But your conduct, Mr. Hastings, requires an explanation. You knew of my mistakes, yet would not undeceive me.

Hastings. Tortured as I am with my own disappointments, is this a time for explanations? It is not friendly, Mr. Marlow.

Marlow. But, sir —

Miss Neville. Mr. Marlow, we never kept on your mistake, till it was too late to undeceive you. Be pacified.

(*Enter Servant.*)

Servant. My mistress desires you'll get ready immediately, madam. The horses are putting to. Your hat and things are in the next room. We are to go thirty miles before morning.

(*Exit Servant.*)

Miss Neville. Well, well, I'll come presently.

Marlow (*to* Hastings). Was it well done, sir, to assist in rendering me ridiculous? To hang me out for the scorn of all my acquaintance? Depend upon it, sir, I shall expect an explanation.

Hastings. Was it well done, sir, if you're upon that subject, to deliver what I entrusted to yourself to the care of another, sir?

Miss Neville. Mr. Hastings! Mr. Marlow! Why will you increase my distress by this groundless dispute? I implore, I entreat you —

(*Enter Servant.*)

Servant. Your cloak, madam. My mistress is impatient.

Miss Neville. I come. [*Exit Servant.*] Pray, be pacified. If I leave you thus, I shall die with apprehension!

(*Enter Servant.*)

Servant. Your fan, muff, and gloves, madam. The horses are waiting.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Miss Neville. Oh, Mr. Marlow! if you knew what a scene of constraint and ill-nature lies before me, I am sure it would convert your resentment into pity.

MARLOW. I'm so distracted with a variety of passions that I don't know what I do. Forgive me, madam. George, forgive me. You know my hasty temper, and should not exasperate it.

HASTINGS. The torture of my situation is my only excuse.

MISS NEVILLE. Well, my dear Hastings, if you have that esteem for me that I think, that I am sure you have, your constancy for three years will but increase the happiness of our future connection. If —

MRS. HARDCASTLE (*within*). Miss Neville! Constance! why, Constance, I say!

MISS NEVILLE. I'm coming! Well, constancy. Remember, constancy is the word. (*Exit.*)

HASTINGS. My heart! how can I support this! To be so near happiness, and such happiness!

MARLOW (*to Tony*). You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly. What might be amusement to you is here disappointment, and even distress.

TONY (*from a reverie*). Ecod, I have hit it. It's here! Your hands. Yours, and yours, my poor Sulky. — My boots there, ho! — Meet me, two hours hence, at the bottom of the garden; and if you don't find Tony Lumpkin a more good-natured fellow than you thought for, I'll give you leave to take my best horse, and Bet Bouncer into the bargain! Come along. My boots, ho! (*Exeunt.*)

ACT V.

[SCENE I — *The house.*]

(*Enter* HASTINGS *and Servant.*)

HASTINGS. You saw the old lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say?

SERVANT. Yes, your honor. They went off in a postcoach, and the young Squire went on horseback. They're thirty miles off by this time.

HASTINGS. Then all my hopes are over.

SERVANT. Yes, sir. Old Sir Charles is arrived. He and the old gentleman of the house have been laughing at Mr. Marlow's mistake this half hour. They are coming this way. [*Exit.*]

HASTINGS. Then I must not be seen. So now to my fruitless appointment at the bottom of the garden. This is about the time. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* SIR CHARLES MARLOW *and* HARDCASTLE.)

HARDCASTLE. Ha! ha! ha! The peremptory tone in which he sent forth his sublime commands!

SIR CHARLES. And the reserve with which I suppose he treated all your advances.

HARDCASTLE. And yet he might have seen something in me above a common innkeeper, too.

SIR CHARLES. Yes, Dick, but he mistook you for an uncommon innkeeper; ha! ha! ha!

HARDCASTLE. Well, I'm in too good spirits to think of anything but joy. Yes, my dear friend, this union of our families will make our personal friendships hereditary; and though my daughter's fortune is but small —

SIR CHARLES. Why, Dick, will you talk of fortune to *me?* My son is possessed of more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share his happiness and increase it. If they like each other, as you say they do —

HARDCASTLE. *If*, man! I tell you they *do* like each other. My daughter as good as told me so.

SIR CHARLES. But girls are apt to flatter themselves, you know.

HARDCASTLE. I saw him grasp her hand in the warmest manner, myself; and here he comes to put you out of your *ifs*, I warrant him.

(*Enter* MARLOW.)

MARLOW. I come, sir, once more, to ask pardon for my strange conduct. I can scarce reflect on my insolence without confusion.

HARDCASTLE. Tut, boy, a trifle.

You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again. She'll never like you the worse for it.

Marlow. Sir, I shall be always proud of her approbation.

Hardcastle. Approbation is but a cold word, Mr. Marlow; if I am not deceived, you have something more than approbation thereabouts. You take me?

Marlow. Really, sir, I have not that happiness.

Hardcastle. Come, boy, I'm an old fellow, and know what's what as well as you that are younger. I know what has passed between you; but mum.

Marlow. Sure, sir, nothing has passed between us but the most profound respect on my side, and the most distant reserve on hers. You don't think, sir, that my impudence has been passed upon all the rest of the family?

Hardcastle. Impudence! No, I don't say that — not quite impudence — though girls like to be played with, and rumpled a little, too, sometimes. But she has told no tales, I assure you.

Marlow. I never gave her the slightest cause.

Hardcastle. Well, well, I like modesty in its place well enough; but this is over-acting, young gentleman. You *may* be open. Your father and I will like you the better for it.

Marlow. May I die, sir, if I ever —

Hardcastle. I tell you she don't dislike you; and as I am sure you like her —

Marlow. Dear sir, — I protest, sir —

Hardcastle. I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you.

Marlow. But hear me, sir —

Hardcastle. Your father approves the match; I admire it; every moment's delay will be doing mischief; so —

Marlow. But why won't you hear me? By all that's just and true, I never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of my attachment, or even the most distant hint to suspect me of affection. We had but one interview, and that was formal, modest, and uninteresting.

Hardcastle (*aside*). This fellow's formal, modest impudence is beyond bearing.

Sir Charles. And you never grasped her hand, or made any protestations?

Marlow. As heaven is my witness, I came down in obedience to your commands. I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance. I hope you'll exact no further proofs of my duty, nor prevent me from leaving a house in which I suffer so many mortifications. (*Exit.*)

Sir Charles. I'm astonished at the air of sincerity with which he parted.

Hardcastle. And I'm astonished at the deliberate intrepidity of his assurance.

Sir Charles. I dare pledge my life and honor upon his truth.

Hardcastle. Here comes my daughter, and I would stake my happiness upon her veracity.

(*Enter* Miss Hardcastle.)

Hardcastle. Kate, come hither, child. Answer us sincerely, and without reserve; has Mr. Marlow made you any professions of love and affection?

Miss Hardcastle. The question is very abrupt, sir. But since you require unreserved sincerity, I think he has.

Hardcastle (*to* Sir Charles). You see.

Sir Charles. And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview?

Miss Hardcastle. Yes, sir, several.

Hardcastle (*to* Sir Charles). You see.

Sir Charles. But did he profess any attachment?

Miss Hardcastle. A lasting one.

Sir Charles. Did he talk of love?

Miss Hardcastle. Much, sir.

Sir Charles. Amazing! And all this formally?

Miss Hardcastle. Formally.

Hardcastle. Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied.

Sir Charles. And how did he behave, madam?

Miss Hardcastle. As most professed admirers do; said some civil things of my face; talked much of his want of merit, and the greatness of mine; mentioned his heart, gave a short tragedy speech, and ended with pretended rapture.

Sir Charles. Now I'm perfectly convinced, indeed. I know his conversation among women to be modest and submissive. This forward, canting, ranting manner by no means describes him, and, I am confident, he never sate for the picture.

Miss Hardcastle. Then what, sir, if I should convince you to your face of my sincerity? If you and my papa, in about half an hour, will place yourselves behind that screen, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person.

Sir Charles. Agreed. And if I find him what you describe, all my happiness in him must have an end.

(*Exit.*)

Miss Hardcastle. And if you don't find him what I describe — I fear my happiness must never have a beginning.

(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene II.] *The back of the garden.*

(*Enter* Hastings.)

Hastings. What an idiot am I to wait here for a fellow who probably takes a delight in mortifying me. He never intended to be punctual, and I'll wait no longer. What do I see? It is he, and perhaps with news of my Constance.

(*Enter* Tony, *booted and spattered.*)

Hastings. My honest Squire! I now find you a man of your word. This looks like friendship.

Tony. Ay, I'm your friend, and the best friend you have in the world, if you knew but all. This riding by night, by the bye, is cursedly tiresome. It has shook me worse than the basket of a stage-coach.

Hastings. But how? where did you leave your fellow-travellers? Are they in safety? Are they housed?

Tony. Five and twenty miles in two hours and a half is no such bad driving. The poor beasts have smoked for it: rabbit me! but I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox, than ten with such *varment*.

Hastings. Well, but where have you left the ladies? I die with impatience.

Tony. Left them! Why, where should I leave them but where I found them?

Hastings. This is a riddle.

Tony. Riddle me this, then. What's that goes round the house, and round the house, and never touches the house?

Hastings. I'm still astray.

Tony. Why, that's it, mon. I have led them astray. By jingo, there's not a pond nor slough within five miles of the place but they can tell the taste of.

Hastings. Ha! ha! ha! I understand; you took them in a round, while they supposed themselves going forward. And so you have at last brought them home again.

Tony. You shall hear. I first took them down Feather-bed lane, where we stuck fast in the mud. I then rattled them crack over the stones of Up-and-down Hill. I then introduced them to the gibbet on Heavy-tree Heath; and from that, with a circumbendibus, I fairly lodged them in the horse-pond at the bottom of the garden.

Hastings. But no accident, I hope?

Tony. No, no; only mother is confoundedly frightened. She thinks herself forty miles off. She's sick of the journey; and the cattle can scarce crawl. So, if your own horses be ready, you may whip off with Cousin, and I'll be bound that no soul here can budge a foot to follow you.

Hastings. My dear friend, how can I be grateful?

Tony. Ay, now it's "dear friend," "noble Squire." Just now, it was all "idiot," "cub," and "run me through the guts." Damn *your* way of fighting, I say. After we take a knock in this part of the country, we kiss and be friends. But if you had run me through the guts, then I should be dead, and you might go kiss the hangman.

Hastings. The rebuke is just. But I must hasten to relieve Miss Neville; if you keep the old lady employed, I promise to take care of the young one.

Tony. Never fear me. Here she comes. Vanish! [*Exit* Hastings.] She's got from the pond, and draggled up to the waist like a mermaid.

(*Enter* Mrs. Hardcastle.)

Mrs. Hardcastle. Oh, Tony, I'm killed! Shook! Battered to death! I shall never survive it. That last jolt, that laid us against the quickset hedge, has done my business.

Tony. Alack, mamma, it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way.

Mrs. Hardcastle. I wish we were at home again. I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drenched in the mud, overturned in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way! Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

Tony. By my guess, we should be upon Crack-skull Common, about forty miles from home.

Mrs. Hardcastle. O lud! O lud! The most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

Tony. Don't be afraid, mamma; don't be afraid. Two of the five that kept here are hanged, and the other three may not find us. Don't be afraid. Is that a man that's galloping behind us? No, it's only a tree. Don't be afraid.

Mrs. Hardcastle. The fright will certainly kill me.

Tony. Do you see anything like a black hat moving behind the thicket?

Mrs. Hardcastle. Oh, death!

Tony. No, it's only a cow. Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid.

Mrs. Hardcastle. As I'm alive, Tony, I see a man coming towards us. Ah, I am sure on't! If he perceives us, we are undone.

Tony (*aside*). Father-in-law, by all that's unlucky, come to take one of his night walks. (*To her.*) Ah, it's a highwayman, with pistols as long as my arm. A damned ill-looking fellow!

Mrs. Hardcastle. Good Heaven defend us! He approaches.

Tony. Do you hide yourself in that thicket, and leave me to manage him. If there be any danger, I'll cough and cry hem. When I cough, be sure to keep close.

(Mrs. Hardcastle *hides behind a tree in the back scene.*)

(*Enter* Hardcastle.)

Hardcastle. I'm mistaken, or I heard voices of people in want of help. Oh, Tony, is that you? I did not expect you so soon back. Are your mother and her charge in safety?

Tony. Very safe, sir, at my Aunt Pedigree's. Hem.

Mrs. Hardcastle (*from behind*). Ah, death! I find there's danger.

Hardcastle. Forty miles in three hours; sure that's too much, my youngster.

Tony. Stout horses and willing minds make short journeys, as they say. Hem.

Mrs. Hardcastle (*from behind*). Sure, he'll do the dear boy no harm.

Hardcastle. But I heard a voice here; I should be glad to know from whence it came.

Tony. It was I, sir, talking to myself, sir. I was saying that forty miles in four hours was very good going. Hem. As to be sure it was. Hem. I have got a sort of cold by being out in the air. We'll go in, if you please. Hem.

Hardcastle. But if you talked to yourself, you did not answer yourself. I'm certain I heard two voices, and resolved (*raising his voice*) to find the other out.

Mrs. Hardcastle (*from behind*). Oh! he's coming to find me out. Oh!

Tony. What need you go, sir, if I tell you? Hem. I'll lay down my life for the truth — hem — I'll tell you all, sir.

(*Detaining him.*)

Hardcastle. I tell you I will not be detained. I insist on seeing. It's in vain to expect I'll believe you.

Mrs. Hardcastle (*running forward from behind*). O lud! he'll murder my poor boy, my darling! Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me. Take my money, my life, but spare that young gentleman; spare my child, if you have any mercy.

Hardcastle. My wife, as I'm a Christian! From whence can she come, or what does she mean?

Mrs. Hardcastle (*kneeling*). Take compassion on us, good Mr. Highwayman. Take our money, our watches, all we have, but spare our lives. We will never bring you to justice; indeed we won't, good Mr. Highwayman.

Hardcastle. I believe the woman's out of her senses. What, Dorothy, don't you know *me?*

Mrs. Hardcastle. Mr. Hardcastle, as I'm alive! My fears blinded me. But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this frightful place, so far from home? What has brought you to follow us?

Hardcastle. Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits? So far from home, when you are within forty yards of your own door! (*To him.*) This is one of your old tricks, you graceless rogue, you! (*To her.*) Don't you know the gate, and the mulberry tree; and don't you remember the horse-pond, my dear?

Mrs. Hardcastle. Yes, I shall remember the horse-pond as long as I live; I have caught my death in it. (*To* Tony.) And is it to you, you graceless varlet, I owe all this? I'll teach you to abuse your mother, I will.

Tony. Ecod, mother, all the parish says you have spoiled me, so you may take the fruits on't.

Mrs. Hardcastle. I'll spoil you, I will.

(*Follows him off the stage. Ex*[*eunt.*])

Hardcastle. There's morality, however, in his reply.

(*Exit.*)

(*Enter* Hastings *and* Miss Neville.)

Hastings. My dear Constance, why will you deliberate thus? If we delay a moment, all is lost forever. Pluck up a little resolution, and we shall soon be out of the reach of her malignity.

Miss Neville. I find it impossible. My spirits are so sunk with the agitations I have suffered, that I am unable to face any new danger. Two or three years' patience will at last crown us with happiness.

Hastings. Such a tedious delay is worse than inconstancy. Let us fly, my charmer! Let us date our happiness from this very moment. Perish fortune. Love and content will increase what we possess beyond a monarch's revenue. Let me prevail!

Miss Neville. No, Mr. Hastings, no. Prudence once more comes to my relief, and I will obey its dictates. In the moment of passion, fortune may be despised, but it ever produces a lasting repentance. I'm resolved to apply to Mr. Hardcastle's compassion and justice for redress.

Hastings. But though he had the will he has not the power to relieve you.

Miss Neville. But he has influence, and upon that I am resolved to rely.

Hastings. I have no hopes. But, since you persist, I must reluctantly obey you.

(*Exeunt.*)

[Scene III. *The house*].

(*Enter* Sir Charles *and* Miss Hardcastle.)

Sir Charles. What a situation am I in! If what you say appears, I shall then find a guilty son. If what he says be true, I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most wished for a daughter.

Miss Hardcastle. I am proud of your approbation; and to show I merit it, if you place yourselves as I directed, you shall hear his explicit declaration. But he comes.

Sir Charles. I'll to your father, and keep him to the appointment.

(*Exit* Sir Charles.)

(*Enter* Marlow.)

Marlow. Though prepared for setting out, I come once more to take leave; nor did I, till this moment, know the pain I feel in the separation.

Miss Hardcastle (*in her own natural manner*). I believe these sufferings cannot be very great, sir, which you can so easily remove. A day or two longer, perhaps, might lessen your uneasiness, by showing the little value of what you now think proper to regret.

Marlow (*aside*). This girl every moment improves upon me. (*To her.*) It must not be, madam; I have already trifled too long with my heart. My very pride begins to submit to my passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals begin to lose their weight; and nothing can restore me to myself but this painful effort of resolution.

Miss Hardcastle. Then go, sir; I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though my family be as good as hers you came down to visit, and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit; I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fixed on fortune.

(*Enter* Hardcastle *and* Sir Charles *from behind.*)

Sir Charles. Here, behind this screen.

Hardcastle. Ay, ay; make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last.

Marlow. By heavens, madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration. Your beauty at first caught my eye; for who could see that without emotion? But every moment that I converse with you, steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What at first seemed rustic plainness, now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance, now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence and conscious virtue.

Sir Charles. What can it mean? He amazes me!

Hardcastle. I told you how it would be. Hush!

Marlow. I am now determined to stay, madam, and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.

Miss Hardcastle. No, Mr. Marlow, I will not, cannot detain you. Do you think I could suffer a connection in which there is the smallest room for repentance? Do you think I would take the mean advantage of a transient passion to load you with confusion? Do you think I could ever relish that happiness which was acquired by lessening yours?

Marlow. By all that's good, I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me! Nor shall I ever feel repentance but in not having seen your merits before. I will stay, even contrary to your wishes; and though you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct.

Miss Hardcastle. Sir, I must entreat you'll desist. As our acquaintance began, so let it end, in indifference. I might have given an hour or two to levity; but seriously, Mr. Marlow, do you think I could ever submit to a connection where I must appear mercenary, and you imprudent? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident addresses of a secure admirer?

Marlow (*kneeling*). Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence? No, madam, every moment that shows me your merit, only serves to increase my diffidence and confusion. Here let me continue —

Sir Charles. I can hold it no longer. Charles, Charles, how hast thou deceived me! Is this your indifference, your uninteresting conversation?

Hardcastle. Your cold contempt! your formal interview! What have you to say now?

Marlow. That I'm all amazement! What can it mean?

Hardcastle. It means that you can say and unsay things at pleasure; that you can address a lady in private, and deny it in public; that you have one story for us, and another for my daughter.

Marlow. Daughter! — this lady your daughter?

Hardcastle. Yes, sir, my only daughter — my Kate; whose else should she be?

Marlow. Oh, the devil!

MISS HARDCASTLE. Yes, sir, that very identical tall, squinting lady you were pleased to take me for (*curtseying*); she that you addressed as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold, forward, agreeable Rattle of the Ladies' Club. Ha! ha! ha!

MARLOW. Zounds, there's no bearing this; it's worse than death!

MISS HARDCASTLE. In which of your characters, sir, will you give us leave to address you? As the faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy; or the loud, confident creature, that keeps it up with Mrs. Mantrap, and old Miss Biddy Buckskin, till three in the morning? Ha! ha! ha!

MARLOW. Oh, curse on my noisy head! I never attempted to be impudent yet that I was not taken down. I must be gone.

HARDCASTLE. By the hand of my body, but you shall not. I see it was all a mistake, and I am rejoiced to find it. You shall not, sir, I tell you. I know she'll forgive you. Won't you forgive him, Kate? We'll all forgive you. Take courage, man.

(*They retire, she tormenting him, to the back scene.*)

(*Enter* MRS. HARDCASTLE *and* TONY.)

MRS. HARDCASTLE. So, so, they're gone off. Let them go, I care not.

HARDCASTLE. Who gone?

MRS. HARDCASTLE. My dutiful niece and her gentleman, Mr. Hastings, from town. He who came down with our modest visitor here.

SIR CHARLES. Who, my honest George Hastings! As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice.

HARDCASTLE. Then, by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connection.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune; that remains in this family to console us for her loss.

HARDCASTLE. Sure, Dorothy, you would not be so mercenary?

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Ay, that's my affair, not yours.

HARDCASTLE. But you know if your son, when of age, refuses to marry his cousin, her whole fortune is then at her own disposal.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Ay, but he's not of age, and she has not thought proper to wait for his refusal.

(*Enter* HASTINGS *and* MISS NEVILLE.)

MRS. HARDCASTLE (*aside*). What, returned so soon? I begin not to like it.

HASTINGS (*to* HARDCASTLE). For my late attempt to fly off with your niece, let my present confusion be my punishment. We are now come back, to appeal from your justice to your humanity. By her father's consent I first paid her my addresses, and our passions were first founded in duty.

MISS NEVILLE. Since his death, I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity, I was ready even to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I am now recovered from the delusion, and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from a nearer connection.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Pshaw! pshaw; this is all but the whining end of a modern novel.

HARDCASTLE. Be it what it will, I'm glad they're come back to reclaim their due. Come hither, Tony, boy. Do you refuse this lady's hand, whom I now offer you?

TONY. What signifies my refusing? You know I can't refuse her till I'm of age, father.

HARDCASTLE. While I thought concealing your age, boy, was likely to conduce to your improvement, I concurred with your mother's desire to keep it secret. But since I find she turns it to a wrong use, I must now declare you have been of age this three months.

TONY. Of age! Am I of age, father?

HARDCASTLE. Above three months.

TONY. Then you'll see the first use I'll make of my liberty. (*Taking* MISS NEVILLE's *hand.*) Witness all men, by these presents, that I, Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire, of BLANK place, refuse you, Constantia Neville, spinster, of no place at all, for my true and lawful wife. So Constance Neville may marry whom she pleases, and Tony Lumpkin is his own man again!

SIR CHARLES. Oh, brave Squire!

HASTINGS. My worthy friend!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. My undutiful offspring.

MARLOW. Joy, my dear George, I give you joy sincerely! And could I prevail upon my little tyrant here to be less arbitrary, I should be the happiest man alive, if you would return me the favor.

HASTINGS (*to* MISS HARDCASTLE). Come, madam, you are now driven to the very last scene of all your contrivances. I know you like him, I'm sure he loves you, and you must and shall have him.

HARDCASTLE (*joining their hands*). And I say so, too. And, Mr. Marlow, if she makes as good a wife as she has a daughter, I don't believe you'll ever repent your bargain. So now to supper. To-morrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the Mistakes of the Night shall be crowned with a merry morning. So, boy, take her; and as you have been mistaken in the mistress, my wish is, that you may never be mistaken in the wife.

(*Exeunt Omnes.*)

EPILOGUE

BY DR. GOLDSMITH

[SPOKEN BY MRS. BULKLEY IN THE CHARACTER OF MISS HARDCASTLE.]

WELL, having stooped to conquer with success,
And gained a husband without aid from dress,
Still, as a bar-maid, I could wish it too,
As I have conquered him to conquer you:
And let me say, for all your resolution,
That pretty bar-maids have done execution.
Our life is all a play, composed to please;
"We have our exits and our entrances."
The first act shows the simple country maid,
Harmless and young, of everything afraid;
Blushes when hired, and with unmeaning action,
"I hopes as how to give you satisfaction."
Her second act displays a livelier scene, —
Th' unblushing bar-maid of a country inn,
Who whisks about the house, at market caters,
Talks loud, coquets the guests, and scolds the waiters.
Next the scene shifts to town, and there she soars,
The chop-house toast of ogling connoisseurs.
On Squires and Cits she there displays her arts,
And on the gridiron broils her lovers' hearts;
And, as she smiles, her triumphs to complete,
E'en common-councilmen forget to eat.
The fourth act shows her wedded to the Squire,
And Madam now begins to hold it higher;
Pretends to taste, at Operas cries *caro!*

And quits her *Nancy Dawson* for *Che Faro:*
Doats upon dancing, and in all her pride,
Swims round the room, the Heinel of Cheapside;
Ogles and leers, with artificial skill,
Till, having lost in age the power to kill,
She sits all night at cards, and ogles at spadille.
Such, through our lives, th' eventful history!
The fifth and last act still remains for me:
The bar-maid now for your protection prays,
Turns female barrister, and pleads for Bayes.

EPILOGUE

To be Spoken in the Character of Tony Lumpkin

By J. Cradock, Esq.

Well, now all's ended, and my comrades gone,
Pray what becomes of *mother's nonly son?*
A hopeful blade! — in town I'll fix my station,
And try to make a bluster in the nation.
As for my cousin Neville, I renounce her,
Off, in a crack, I'll carry big Bet Bouncer.
  Why should not I in the great world appear?
I soon shall have a thousand pounds a year;
No matter what a man may here inherit,
In London — gad, they've some regard to spirit.
I see the horses prancing up the streets,
And big Bet Bouncer bobs to all she meets;
Then hoiks to jigs and pastimes every night —
Not to the plays — they say it a'n't polite:
To Sadler's Wells, perhaps, or operas go,
And once, by chance, to the roratorio.
Thus, here and there, forever up and down,
We'll set the fashions, too, to half the town;
And then at auctions — money ne'er regard —
Buy pictures, like the great, ten pounds a yard:
Zounds! we shall make these London gentry say,
We know what's damned genteel as well as they!

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL[1]

BY RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

(1777)

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[1] The text follows the version printed in the Riverside College Classics, collated and edited by Hanson Hart Webster.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Sir Peter Teazle
Sir Oliver Surface
Joseph Surface
Charles
Crabtree
Sir Benjamin Backbite
Rowley
Moses
Trip
Snake
Careless
Sir Harry Bumper

Lady Teazle
Maria
Lady Sneerwell
Mrs. Candour

A PORTRAIT

ADDRESSED TO MRS. CREWE, WITH THE COMEDY OF THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

BY R. B. SHERIDAN, ESQ.

TELL me, ye prim adepts in Scandal's school,
Who rail by precept, and detract by rule,
Lives there no character, so tried, so known,
So deck'd with grace, and so unlike your own,
That even you assist her fame to raise,
Approve by envy, and by silence praise?
Attend! — a model shall attract your view —
Daughters of calumny, I summon you!
You shall decide if this a portrait prove,
Or fond creation of the Muse and Love.
Attend, ye virgin critics, shrewd and sage,
Ye matron censors of this childish age,
Whose peering eye and wrinkled front declare
A fixed antipathy to young and fair;
By cunning, cautious; or by nature, cold,
In maiden madness, virulently bold!
Attend! ye skilled to coin the precious tale,
Creating proof, where innuendos fail!
Whose practised memories, cruelly exact,
Omit no circumstance, except the fact!
Attend all ye who boast — or old or young —
The living libel of a slanderous tongue!
So shall my theme as far contrasted be,
As saints by fiends, or hymns by calumny.
Come, gentle Amoret (for 'neath that name,
In worthier verse is sung thy beauty's fame);
Come — for but thee who seeks the Muse? and while
Celestial blushes check thy conscious smile,
With timid grace and hesitating eye,
The perfect model, which I boast, supply.
Vain Muse! couldst thou the humblest sketch create
Of her, or slightest charm couldst imitate —
Could thy blest strain in kindred colors trace
The faintest wonder of her form and face —
Poets would study the immortal line,
And *Reynolds* own *his* art subdued by thine;
That art, which well might added lustre give
To Nature's best, and Heaven's superlative:
On *Granby's* cheek might bid new glories rise,
Or point a purer beam from *Devon's* eyes!
Hard is the task to shape that beauty's praise,

Whose judgment scorns the homage flattery pays!
But praising Amoret we cannot err,
No tongue o'ervalues Heaven, or flatters her!
Yet she by Fate's perverseness — she alone
Would doubt our truth, nor deem such praise her own!
Adorning Fashion, unadorn'd by dress,
Simple from taste, and not from carelessness;
Discreet in gesture, in deportment mild,
Not stiff with prudence, nor uncouthly wild:
No state has *Amoret!* no studied mien;
She frowns no *goddess*, and she moves no *queen.*
The softer charm that in her manner lies
Is framed to captivate, yet not surprise;
It justly suits th' expression of her face —
'Tis less than dignity, and more than grace!
On her pure cheek the native hue is such,
That form'd by Heav'n to be admired so much,
The hand divine, with a less partial care,
Might well have fix'd a fainter crimson there,
And bade the gentle inmate of her breast —
Inshrined Modesty! — supply the rest.
But who the peril of her lips shall paint?
Strip them of smiles — still, still all words are faint!
But moving Love himself appears to teach
Their action, though denied to rule her speech;
And thou who seest her speak and dost not hear,
Mourn not her distant accents 'scape thine ear;
Viewing those lips, thou still may'st make pretence
To judge of what she says, and swear 'tis sense:
Cloth'd with such grace, with such expression fraught,
They move in meaning, and they pause in thought!
But dost thou farther watch, with charm'd surprise,
The mild irresolution of her eyes,
Curious to mark how frequent they repose,
In brief eclipse and momentary close —
Ah! seest thou not an ambush'd Cupid there,
Too tim'rous of his charge, with jealous care
Veils and unveils those beams of heav'nly light,
Too full, too fatal else, for mortal sight?
Nor yet, such pleasing vengeance fond to meet,
In pard'ning dimples hope a safe retreat.
What though her peaceful breast should ne'er allow
Subduing frowns to arm her alter'd brow,
By Love, I swear, and by his gentle wiles,
More fatal still the mercy of her smiles!
Thus lovely, thus adorn'd, possessing all
Of bright or fair that can to woman fall.
The height of vanity might well be thought
Prerogative in her, and Nature's fault.
Yet gentle *Amoret*, in mind supreme
As well as charms, rejects the vainer theme;
And half mistrustful of her beauty's store,

She barbs with wit those darts too keen before: —
Read in all knowledge that her sex should reach,
Though *Greville*, or the *Muse*, should deign to teach,
Fond to improve, nor tim'rous to discern
How far it is a woman's grace to learn;
In *Millar's* dialect she would not prove
Apollo's priestess, but Apollo's love,
Graced by those signs, which truth delights to own,
The timid blush, and mild submitted tone:
Whate'er she says, though sense appear throughout,
Displays the tender hue of female doubt;
Deck'd with that charm, how lovely wit appears,
How graceful *science*, when that robe she wears!
Such too her talents, and her bent of mind,
As speak a sprightly heart by thought refined,
A taste for mirth, by contemplation school'd,
A turn for ridicule, by candour ruled,
A scorn of folly, which she tries to hide;
An awe of talent, which she owns with pride!
  Peace! idle Muse, no more thy strain prolong,
But yield a theme, thy warmest praises wrong;
Just to her merit, though thou canst not raise
Thy feeble voice, behold th' acknowledged praise
Has spread conviction through the envious train,
And cast a fatal gloom o'er Scandal's reign!
And lo! each pallid hag, with blister'd tongue,
Mutters assent to all thy zeal has sung —
Owns all the colors just — the outline true;
Thee my inspirer, and my *model* — CREWE!

PROLOGUE

Written by Mr. Garrick

A School for Scandal! tell me, I beseech you,
Needs there a school this modish art to teach you?
No need of lessons now, the knowing think;
We might as well be taught to eat and drink.
Caused by a dearth of scandal, should the vapors
Distress our fair ones — let them read the papers;
Their powerful mixtures such disorders hit;
Crave what you will — there's *quantum sufficit.*
"Lord!" cries my Lady *Wormwood* (who loves tattle,
And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle),
Just ris'n at noon, all night at cards when threshing
Strong tea and scandal — "Bless me, how refreshing!
"Give me the papers, *Lisp* — how bold and free! (*sips*)
"*Last night Lord L.* (*sips*) *was caught with Lady D.*
"For aching heads what charming *sal volatile!* (*sips.*)
"*If Mrs. B. will still continue flirting,*
"*We hope she'll* DRAW, *or we'll* UNDRAW *the curtain.*
"Fine satire, poz — in public all abuse it,
"But, by ourselves (*sips*), our praise we can't refuse it.
"Now, *Lisp*, read you — there, at that dash and star."
"Yes, ma'am — *A certain lord had best beware,*
"*Who lives not twenty miles from Grosvenor Square;*
"*For should he Lady W. find willing,*
"*Wormwood is bitter*" — "Oh, that's me, the villain!
"Throw it behind the fire, and never more
"Let that vile paper come within my door."
Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the dart;
To reach our feelings, we ourselves must smart.
Is our young bard so young, to think that he
Can stop the full spring-tide of calumny?
Knows he the world so little, and its trade?
Alas! the devil's sooner raised than laid.
So strong, so swift, the monster there's no gagging:
Cut Scandal's head off, still the tongue is wagging.
Proud of your smiles once lavishly bestow'd,
Again our young Don Quixote takes the road;
To show his gratitude he draws his pen,
And seeks this hydra, Scandal, in his den.
For your applause all perils he would through —
He'll fight — that's write — a cavalliero true,
Till every drop of blood — that's ink — is spilt for you.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

ACT I.

Scene I. Lady Sneerwell's *House.*

(*Discovered* Lady Sneerwell *at the dressing-table;* Snake *drinking chocolate.*)

Lady Sneer. The paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted?

Snake. They were, madam; and as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion whence they came.

Lady Sneer. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

Snake. That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish. In the common course of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackitt's ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then, you know, the business is as good as done.

Lady Sneer. Why, truly, Mrs. Clackitt has a very pretty talent, and a great deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day. To my knowledge she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons disinherited; of four forced elopements, and as many close confinements; nine separate maintenances, and two divorces. Nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tête-à-tête* in the *Town and Country Magazine,* when the parties, perhaps, had never seen each other's face before in the course of their lives.

Lady Sneer. She certainly has talents, but her manner is gross.

Snake. 'Tis very true. She generally designs well, has a free tongue, and a bold invention; but her coloring is too dark, and her outlines often extravagant. She wants that delicacy of tint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguishes your ladyship's scandal.

Lady Sneer. You are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least; everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or a look than many can with the most labored detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

Lady Sneer. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself in the early part of my life by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

Snake. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

Lady Sneer. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbor, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

Snake. I do. Here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death; the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of; the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character: the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship, and apparently your favorite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a city knight, with a good jointure, should not close with the passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

Lady Sneer. Then at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you, that love has no share whatever in the inter-course between Mr. Surface and me.

Snake. No!

Lady Sneer. His real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune; but finding in his brother a favored rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

Lady Sneer. How dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess that Charles, that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation, that he it is for whom I'm thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice everything?

Snake. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent; but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

Lady Sneer. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious; in short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. Yes; yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England; and above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

Lady Sneer. True; and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy, he has brought Sir Peter entirely into his interest with regard to Maria; while poor Charles has no friend in the house, though, I fear, he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

(*Enter Servant.*)

Serv. Mr. Surface.

Lady Sneer. Show him up.

(*Exit Servant.*)

(*Enter* Joseph Surface.)

Joseph S. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do to-day? Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

Lady Sneer. Snake has just been rallying me on our mutual attachment; but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us, and, believe me, the confidence is not ill placed.

Joseph S. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, no compliments now; but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria; or, what is more material to me, your brother.

Joseph S. I have not seen either since I left you; but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

Lady Sneer. Ah! my dear Snake! the merit of this belongs to you; but do your brother's distresses increase?

Joseph S. Every hour. I am told he has had another execution in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I have ever heard of.

Lady Sneer. Poor Charles!

Joseph S. True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one can't help feeling for him. Poor Charles! I'm sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves ——

Lady Sneer. O Lud! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

Joseph S. Egad, that's true! I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter; however, it certainly is a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed, can be so only by a person of your ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming; I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you. Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

(*Exit* Snake.)

Joseph S. Sir, your very devoted. Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any further confidence in that fellow.

Lady Sneer. Why so?

Joseph S. I have lately detected him in

frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

Lady Sneer. And do you think he would betray us?

Joseph S. Nothing more likely; take my word for't, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faithful even to his own villany. Ah! Maria!

(*Enter* Maria.)

Lady Sneer. Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

Maria. Oh! there is that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's, with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out, and ran hither to avoid them.

Lady Sneer. Is that all?

Joseph S. If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

Lady Sneer. Nay, now you are severe; for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard *you* were here. But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done, that you would avoid him so?

Maria. Oh, he has done nothing; but 'tis for what he has said: his conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

Joseph S. Ay, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him; for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend; and his uncle's as bad.

Lady Sneer. Nay, but we should make allowance; Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

Maria. For my part, I confess, madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice. What do you think, Mr. Surface?

Joseph S. Certainly, madam; to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

Lady Sneer. Pshaw! there's no possibility of being witty without a little ill nature: the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick. What's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

Joseph S. To be sure, madam; that conversation, where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, will ever appear tedious and insipid.

Maria. Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable; but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalship, and a thousand motives to depreciate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one.

(*Enter Servant.*)

Serv. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

Lady Sneer. Beg her to walk in. (*Exit Servant.*) Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste; for though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best natured and best sort of woman.

Maria. Yes, with a very gross affectation of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Joseph S. I' faith that's true, Lady Sneerwell: whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

Lady Sneer. Hush! here she is!

(*Enter* Mrs. Candour.)

Mrs. Can. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century? Mr. Surface, what news do you hear? though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

Joseph S. Just so, indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. Oh, Maria! child, what, is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume; the town talks of nothing else.

Maria. Indeed! I am very sorry, ma'am, the town is not better employed.

Mrs. Can. True, true, child; but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn, from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

Maria. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

Mrs. Can. Very true, child; but what's to be done? People will talk; there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filigree Flirt. But, Lord! there's no minding what one hears; though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

Maria. Such reports are highly scandalous.

Mrs. Can. So they are, child; shameful! shameful! But the world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill-nature of people, that they say her uncle stopped her last week, just as she was stepping into the York diligence with her dancing-master.

Maria. I'll answer for't there are no grounds for that report.

Mrs. Can. Ah, no foundation in the world, I dare swear: no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month, of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino; though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

Joseph S. The licence of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

Maria. 'Tis so; but, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

Mrs. Can. To be sure they are; tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers; 'tis an old observation, and a very true one. But what's to be done, as I said before? How will you prevent people from talking? To-day, Mrs. Clackitt assured me, Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted that a certain widow, in the next street, had got rid of her dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner. And at the same time, Miss Tattle, who was by, affirmed that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame; and that Sir H. Boquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar provocation. But, Lord, do you think I would report these things? No, no! tale-bearers, as I said before, are just as bad as the tale-makers.

Joseph S. Ah Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your forbearance and good-nature?

Mrs. Can. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance, I own I always love to think the best. By-the-bye, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined?

Joseph S. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. Ah! I heard so; but you must tell him to keep up his spirits; everybody almost is in the same way — Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickit — all up, I hear, within this week; so if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation.

Joseph S. Doubtless, ma'am; a very great one.

(*Enter Servant.*)

Serv. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite.

(*Exit Servant.*)

Lady Sneer. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you; positively you sha'n't escape.

(*Enter* Crabtree *and* Sir Benjamin Backbite.)

Crabt. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad! ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too; isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?

Sir Benj. B. O fie, uncle!

Crabt. Nay, egad, it's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymer in the kingdom. Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire? Do, Benjamin, repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore at

Mrs. Drowzie's conversazione. Come now; your first is the name of a fish, your second a great naval commander, and ——

Sir Benj. B. Uncle, now — pr'ythee ——

Crabt. I' faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise you to hear how ready he is at all these fine sort of things.

Lady Sneer. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything.

Sir Benj. B. To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. However, I have some love elegies, which, when favored with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public.

Crabt. 'Fore heaven, ma'am, they'll immortalize you! You will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharissa.

Sir Benj. B. Yes, madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall meander through a meadow of margin. 'Fore Gad, they will be the most elegant things of their kind!

Crabt. But, ladies, that's true. Have you heard the news?

Mrs. Can. What, sir, do you mean the report of ——

Crabt. No, ma'am, that's not it. Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Can. Impossible!

Crabt. Ask Sir Benjamin.

Sir Benj. B. 'Tis very true, ma'am; everything is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

Crabt. Yes; and they do say there were pressing reasons for it.

Lady Sneer. Why I have heard something of this before.

Mrs. Can. It can't be, and I wonder any one should believe such a story, of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

Sir Benj. B. O Lud! ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so reserved, that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Can. Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp, as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny, sickly reputation, that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robuster characters of a hundred prudes.

Sir Benj. B. True, madam, there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution; who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

Mrs. Can. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

Crabt. That they do, I'll be sworn, ma'am. Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge? Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

Sir Benj. B. Oh, to be sure! The most whimsical circumstance.

Lady Sneer. How was it, pray?

Crabt. Why, one evening, at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a young lady in company, I have known instances of it, for Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins. What! cries the Lady Dowager Dundizzy (who you know is as deaf as a post), has Miss Piper had twins? This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughter. However, 'twas the next morning everywhere reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and a girl; and in less than a week there were some people who could name the father, and the farm-house where the babies were put to nurse.

Lady Sneer. Strange, indeed!

Crabt. Matter of fact, I assure you. O Lud! Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

JOSEPH S. Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

CRABT. He has been in the East Indies a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe? Sad comfort whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on!

JOSEPH S. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him. He may reform.

SIR BENJ. B. To be sure he may; for my part, I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say; and though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

CRABT. That's true, egad, nephew. If the Old Jewry was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman. No man more popular there, 'fore Gad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine; and that whenever he is sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

SIR BENJ. B. Yet no man lives in greater splendor. They tell me, when he entertains his friends he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities; have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

JOSEPH S. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

MARIA. Their malice is intolerable. Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning: I'm not very well.

(*Exit* MARIA.)

MRS. CAN. O dear! she changes color very much.

LADY SNEER. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her: she may want assistance.

MRS. CAN. That I will, with all my soul, ma'am. Poor dear girl, who knows what her situation may be!

(*Exit* MRS. CANDOUR.)

LADY SNEER. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

SIR BENJ. B. The young lady's *penchant* is obvious.

CRABT. But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that: follow her, and put her into good humour. Repeat her some of your own verses. Come, I'll assist you.

SIR BENJ. B. Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you; but depend on't your brother is utterly undone.

CRABT. O Lud, ay! undone as ever man was. Can't raise a guinea!

SIR BENJ. B. And everything sold, I'm told, that was movable.

CRABT. I have seen one that was at his house. Not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscots.

SIR BENJ. B. And I'm very sorry, also, to hear some bad stories against him. (*Going.*)

CRABT. Oh! he has done many mean things, that's certain.

SIR BENJ. B. But, however, as he's your brother ——

(*Going.*)

CRABT. We'll tell you all another opportunity.

(*Ex*[*eunt*] CRABTREE *and* SIR BENJAMIN.)

LADY SNEER. Ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

JOSEPH S. And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than Maria.

LADY SNEER. I doubt her affections are farther engaged than we imagine. But the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are, and we shall have an opportunity of observing farther; in the mean time, I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study sentiment.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II. SIR PETER'S *House.*

(*Enter* SIR PETER.)

SIR PETER T. When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men; and I have been the most miserable dog ever since! We tifted a little going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. Yet I chose with caution — a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown, nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race ball. Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town, with as ready a grace as if she had never seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square! I am sneered at by all my acquaintance, and paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humors: yet the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it.

(*Enter* Rowley.)

Rowley. Oh! Sir Peter, your servant; how is it with you, sir?

Sir Peter T. Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Rowley. What can have happened to trouble you since yesterday?

Sir Peter T. A good question to a married man!

Rowley. Nay, I'm sure your lady, Sir Peter, can't be the cause of your uneasiness.

Sir Peter T. Why, has anybody told you she was dead?

Rowley. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

Sir Peter T. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am, myself, the sweetest tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper; and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

Rowley. Indeed!

Sir Peter T. Ay; and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong! But Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage the perverseness of her disposition. Then, to complete my vexation, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband; meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

Rowley. You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen. I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of the elder. For Charles, my life on't! he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father, once my honoured master, was, at his years, nearly as wild a spark; yet, when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

Sir Peter T. You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both, till their uncle Sir Oliver's liberality gave them an early independence: of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the *sentiments* he professes; but for the other, take my word for't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance. Ah! my old friend, Sir Oliver, will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

Rowley. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

Sir Peter T. What! let me hear.

Rowley. Sir Oliver *is* arrived, and at this moment in town.

Sir Peter T. How! you astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

Rowley. I did not; but his passage has been remarkably quick.

Sir Peter T. Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'Tis fifteen years since we met. We have had many a day together; but does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

Rowley. Most strictly. He means,

before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

Sir Peter T. Ah! there needs no art to discover their merits; he shall have his way. But, pray, does he know I am married?

Rowley. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

Sir Peter T. What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption. Ah! Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together, and he has been steady to his text. Well, he must be soon at my house, though! I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

Rowley. By no means.

Sir Peter T. For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes; so I'd have him think, Lord forgive me! that we are a very happy couple.

Rowley. I understand you; but then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

Sir Peter T. Egad, and so we must, and that's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves — no — the crime carries its punishment along with it.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT II.

Scene I. [Sir Peter's *House*.]

(*Enter* Sir Peter *and* Lady Teazle.)

Sir Peter T. Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

Lady T. Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything, and what's more, I will, too. What! though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

Sir Peter T. Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

Lady T. Authority! No, to be sure, if you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me: I am sure you were old enough.

Sir Peter T. Old enough! ay, there it is. Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance.

Lady T. My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

Sir Peter T. No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon into a green-house, and give a *fête champêtre* at Christmas.

Lady T. And am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure, I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet.

Sir Peter T. Oons! madam; if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.

Lady T. No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, madam; you were then in somewhat a humbler style: the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first sitting at your tambor, in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side; your hair combed smooth over a roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted, of your own working.

Lady T. O, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, ma'am, 'twas so indeed.

Lady T. And then, you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; to play Pope Joan with the curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

Sir Peter T. I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach — *vis-à-vis* — and three powdered footmen before your chair; and in the summer, a pair of white cats to draw you to Kensington Gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, on a docked coach-horse?

Lady T. No; I swear I never did that. I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

Sir Peter T. This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank; in short, I have made you my wife.

Lady T. Well, then, and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation, and that is ——

Sir Peter T. My widow, I suppose?

Lady T. Hem! hem!

Sir Peter T. I thank you, madam; but don't flatter yourself; for though your ill conduct may disturb my peace, it shall never break my heart, I promise you; however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady T. Then why will you endeavour to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

Sir Peter T. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

Lady T. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

Sir Peter T. The fashion, indeed! what had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

Lady T. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Peter T. Ay, there again; taste! Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

Lady T. That's very true indeed, Sir Peter; and after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir Peter T. Ah, there's another precious circumstance; a charming set of acquaintance you have made there.

Lady T. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

Sir Peter T. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

Lady T. What! would you restrain the freedom of speech?

Sir Peter T. Ah! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

Lady T. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse. When I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humour; and I take it for granted, they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

Sir Peter T. Well, well, I'll call in just to look after my own character.

Lady T. Then indeed you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. So, good-bye to ye. (*Exit* Lady Teazle.)

Sir Peter T. So, I have gained much by my intended expostulation; yet, with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasingly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me. (*Exit.*)

Scene II. *At* Lady Sneerwell's.

(*Enter* Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Crabtree, Sir Benjamin Backbite, *and* Joseph Surface

Lady Sneer. Nay, positively, we will hear it.

Joseph S. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

Sir Benj. B. O plague on't, uncle! 'tis mere nonsense.

Crabt. No, no; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore!

Sir Benj. B. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstances. You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Betty Curricle was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of duodecimo phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies, upon which I took out my pocket-book, and in one moment produced the following:

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;
Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies:
To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

Crabt. There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback too.

Joseph S. A very Phœbus mounted, indeed, Sir Benjamin.

Sir Benj. B. O dear sir! trifles, trifles.

(*Enter* Lady Teazle *and* Maria.)

Mrs. Can. I must have a copy.

Lady Sneer. Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter?

Lady T. I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.

Lady Sneer. Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall set down to piquet with Mr. Surface.

Maria. I take very little pleasure in cards; however, I'll do as you please.

Lady T. [*aside*]. I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her; I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me, before Sir Peter came.

Mrs. Can. Now, I'll die, but you are so scandalous, I'll forswear your society.

Lady T. What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

Mrs. Can. They'll not allow our friend, Miss Vermilion, to be handsome.

Lady Sneer. O surely she is a pretty woman.

Crabt. I'm very glad you think so, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. She has a charming fresh color.

Lady T. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs. Can. O fie! I'll swear her color is natural; I have seen it come and go.

Lady T. I dare swear you have, ma'am; it goes off at night, and comes again in the morning.

Sir Benj. B. True, ma'am, it not only comes and goes, but what's more, egad! her maid can fetch and carry it.

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha! how I hate to hear you talk so! But surely, now, her sister *is*, or *was*, very handsome.

Crabt. Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! she's six and fifty if she's an hour.

Mrs. Can. Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost; and I don't think she looks more.

Sir Benj. B. Ah! there's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen *does* take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity, and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre chalks her wrinkles.

Sir Benj. B. Nay, now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, 'tis not that she paints so ill, but when she has finished her face, she joins it so badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur sees at once that the head's modern though the trunk's antique.

Crabt. Ha! ha! ha! well said, nephew.

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha! well, you make me laugh, but I vow I hate you for it. What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir Benj. B. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

Lady T. Yes, and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it on a jar, as it were — thus —

(*Shows her teeth.*)

Mrs. Can. How can you be so ill-natured?

Lady T. Nay, I allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a poor's box, and all her words appear to slide out edgewise, as it were thus, *How do you do, madam? Yes, madam.*

Lady Sneer. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

Lady T. In defence of a friend it is but justice. But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

(*Enter* Sir Peter Teazle.)

Sir Peter T. Ladies, your most obedient. [*Aside.*] Mercy on me! here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose.

Mrs. Can. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious; and Lady Teazle as bad as any one.

Sir Peter T. It must be very distressing to *you*, Mrs. Candour, I dare swear.

Mrs. Can. O, they will allow good qualities to nobody; not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.

Lady T. What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night?

Mrs. Can. Nay, her bulk is her misfortune; and when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

Lady Sneer. That's very true, indeed.

Lady T. Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small whey; laces herself by pullies; and often in the hottest noon in summer, you may see her on a little squat pony, with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's, and puffing round the Ring on a full trot.

Mrs. Can. I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

Sir Peter T. Yes, a good defence, truly!

Mrs. Can. Truly, Lady Teazle is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

Crabt. Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious — an awkward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

Mrs. Can. Positively you shall not be so very severe. Miss Sallow is a near relation of mine by marriage, and as for her person, great allowance is to be made; for, let me tell you, a woman labors under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl at six-and-thirty.

Lady Sneer. Though, surely, she is handsome still; and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candlelight, it is not to be wondered at.

Mrs. Can. True, and then as to her manner; upon my word I think it is particularly graceful, considering she had never had the least education; for you know her mother was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

Sir Benj. B. Ah! you are both of you too good natured!

Sir Peter T. [*aside*]. Yes, damned good natured! This their own relation! mercy on me!

Mrs. Can. For my part, I own I cannot bear to hear a friend ill spoken of.

Sir Peter T. No, to be sure!

Sir Benj. B. Oh! you are of a moral turn. Mrs. Candour and I can sit for an hour and hear Lady Stucco talk sentiment.

Lady T. Nay, I vow Lady Stucco is very well with the dessert after dinner; for she's just like the French fruits one cracks for mottoes — made up of paint and proverb.

Mrs. Can. Well, I never will join in ridiculing a friend; and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle, and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical on beauty.

Crabt. O to be sure! she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

Sir Benj. B. So she has, indeed — an Irish front —

Crabt. Caledonian locks —

Sir Benj. B. Dutch nose —

Crabt. Austrian lips —

Sir Benj. B. Complexion of a Spaniard —

Crabt. And teeth *à la Chinois.*

Sir Benj. B. In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa, where no two guests are of a nation —

Crabt. Or a congress at the close of a general war — wherein all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. [*aside*]. Mercy on my life! — a person they dine with twice a week.

Lady Sneer. Go, go; you are a couple of provoking toads.

Mrs. Can. Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so; for give me leave to say that Mrs. Ogle ——

Sir Peter T. Madam, madam, I beg your pardon; there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when I tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.

Lady Sneer. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, Sir Peter! But you are a cruel creature — too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit in others.

Sir Peter T. Ah! madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your ladyship is aware of.

Lady T. True, Sir Peter. I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

Sir Benj. B. Or rather, madam, suppose them to be man and wife, because one seldom sees them together.

Lady T. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by Parliament.

Sir Peter T. 'Fore heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as poaching on manors, and pass an Act for the preservation of fame, I believe there are many would thank them for the bill.

Lady Sneer. O Lud! Sir Peter; would you deprive us of our privileges?

Sir Peter T. Ay, madam; and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputations, but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

Lady Sneer. Go, you monster!

Mrs. Can. But, surely, you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

Sir Peter T. Yes, madam, I would have law merchant for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crabt. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

Sir Peter T. O, nine out of ten of the malicious inventions are founded on some ridiculous misrepresentation.

Lady Sneer. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

(*Enter a Servant, who whispers* Sir Peter.)

Sir Peter T. I'll be with them directly. [*Apart.*] I'll get away unperceived.

Lady Sneer. Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us?

Sir Peter T. Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me.

(*Exit* Sir Peter.)

Sir Benj. B. Well; certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being; I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily if he were not your husband.

Lady T. O, pray don't mind that; come, do let's hear them.

(*Joins the rest of the company going into the next room.*)

Joseph S. Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

Maria. How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humour, Heaven grant me a double portion of dulness!

Joseph S. Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are; they have no malice at heart.

Maria. Then is their conduct still more contemptible; for, in my opinion, nothing could excuse the interference of their tongues, but a natural and uncontrollable bitterness of mind.

Joseph S. Undoubtedly, madam; and it has always been a sentiment of mine, that to propagate a malicious truth wantonly is more despicable than to falsify from revenge. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others, and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Maria. Why will you distress me by renewing the subject?

Joseph S. Ah, Maria! you would not treat me thus, and oppose your guardian, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favored rival.

Maria. Ungenerously urged! But whatever my sentiments are for that unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up, because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother.

Joseph S. Nay, but Maria, do not leave me with a frown; by all that's honest, I swear [*kneels*] ——

[*Re-enter* Lady Teazle, *behind.*]

[*Aside.*] Gad's life, here's Lady Teazle! [*Aloud to* Maria.] You must not; no, you shall not; for, though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle ——

Maria. Lady Teazle!

Joseph S. Yet were Sir Peter to suspect ——

Lady T. [*coming forward*]. What is this, pray? Do you take her for me? Child, you are wanted in the next room. (*Exit* Maria.) What is all this, pray?

Joseph S. O, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I had for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavouring to reason with her when you came in.

Lady T. Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning; do you usually argue on your knees?

Joseph S. O, she's a child, and I thought a little bombast —— But, Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

Lady T. No, no; I begin to think it would be imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion sanctions.

Joseph S. True, a mere platonic cicisbeo — what every wife is entitled to.

Lady T. Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion. However, I have so much of my country prejudices left, that, though Sir Peter's ill-humour may vex me ever so, it never shall provoke me to ——

Joseph S. The only revenge in your power. Well; I applaud your moderation.

Lady T. Go; you are an insinuating wretch. But we shall be missed; let us join the company.

Joseph S. But we had best not return together.

Lady T. Well, don't stay; for Maria sha'n't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you.

(*Exit* Lady Teazle.)

Joseph S. A curious dilemma my politics have run me into! I wanted, at first, only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last.

(*Exit.*)

Scene III. Sir Peter Teazle's.

(*Enter* Rowley *and* Sir Oliver Surface.)

Sir Oliver S. Ha! ha! ha! So my old friend is married, hey? — a young wife out of the country. Ha! ha! ha! that he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into a husband at last.

Rowley. But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

Sir Oliver S. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance! Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles; never sees him, hey?

Rowley. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has industriously been led into by a scandalous society in the neighborhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

Sir Oliver S. Ay, I know there is a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time; and will rob a young fellow of his good name, before he has years to know the value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you. No, no; if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Rowley. Then, my life on't, you will reclaim him. Ah, sir! it gives me new life to find that *your* heart is not turned against him; and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

Sir Oliver S. What, shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths; and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

Rowley. Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. But here comes Sir Peter.

Sir Oliver S. Egad, so he does. Mercy on me! he's greatly altered, and seems to have a settled married look! One may read *husband* in his face at this distance!

(*Enter* Sir Peter Teazle.)

Sir Peter T. Ha! Sir Oliver, my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!

Sir Oliver S. Thank you — thank you, Sir Peter! and i' faith I am glad to find you well, believe me.

Sir Peter T. Oh! 'tis a long time since we met — fifteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

Sir Oliver S. Ay, I have had my share. But what! I find you are married, hey? Well, well, it can't be helped; and so — I wish you joy with all my heart.

Sir Peter T. Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver. Yes, I have entered into — the happy state; but we'll not talk of that now.

Sir Oliver S. True, true, Sir Peter; old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting; no, no, no.

Rowley. Take care, pray, sir.

Sir Oliver S. Well; so one of my nephews is a wild fellow, hey?

Sir Peter T. Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there; he's a lost young man, indeed. However, his brother will make you amends. Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be. Everybody in the world speaks well of him.

Sir Oliver S. I am sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Everybody speaks well of him! Pshaw! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

Sir Peter T. What, Sir Oliver! do you blame him for not making enemies?

Sir Oliver S. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

Sir Peter T. Well, well; you'll be convinced when you know him. 'Tis edification to hear him converse; he professes the noblest sentiments.

Sir Oliver S. Oh! plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly. But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter; I don't mean to defend Charles's errors; but before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts; and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

Rowley. And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

Sir Peter T. Oh! my life on Joseph's honor.

Sir Oliver S. Well — come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink the lads' health, and tell you our scheme.

Sir Peter T. *Allons*, then!

Sir Oliver S. And don't, Sir Peter, be so severe against your old friend's son.

Odds my life! I am not sorry that he has run out of the course a little; for my part I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth; 'tis like ivy round a sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT III.

Scene I. Sir Peter Teazle's.

(*Enter* Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Oliver Surface, *and* Rowley.)

Sir Peter T. Well, then, we will see this fellow first, and have our wine afterwards; but how is this, Master Rowley? I don't see the jet of your scheme.

Rowley. Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, who I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter, to Mr. Surface and Charles; from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do, and he is, at this time, endeavoring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

Sir Oliver S. Ah! he is my brother's son.

Sir Peter T. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to ——

Rowley. Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends, and as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging, at least, of the benevolence of their dispositions; and believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it, "a heart to pity, and a hand, open as day, for melting charity."

Sir Peter T. Pshaw! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either, when he has nothing left to give? Well, well, make the trial, if you please. But where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine, relative to Charles's affairs?

Rowley. Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence. This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done everything in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

Sir Peter T. Pray let us have him in.

Rowley (*apart to Servant*). Desire Mr. Moses to walk upstairs.

Sir Peter T. But, pray, why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

Rowley. Oh! I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles, but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived, so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests. I have also another evidence in my power — one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall speedily produce him to remove some of your prejudices.

Sir Peter T. I have heard too much on that subject.

Rowley. Here comes the honest Israelite.

(*Enter* Moses.)

This is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver S. Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew, Charles.

Moses. Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him; but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliver S. That was unlucky, truly; for you have had no opportunity of showing your talents.

Moses. None at all; I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliver S. Unfortunate, indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses?

Moses. Yes, he knows that. This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will, I believe, advance him some money.

Sir Peter T. What! one Charles has never had money from before?

Moses. Yes; Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

Sir Peter T. Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me! Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium?

Moses. Not at all.

Sir Peter T. Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old romancing tale of a poor relation. Go with my friend Moses, and represent Premium, and then, I'll answer for it, you'll see your nephew in all his glory.

Sir Oliver S. Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterwards as Old Stanley.

Sir Peter T. True, so you may.

Rowley. Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure. However, Moses, you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful?

Moses. You may depend upon me. This is near the time I was to have gone.

Sir Oliver S. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses. But hold! I have forgot one thing — how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Moses. There's no need — the principal is Christian.

Sir Oliver S. Is he? I'm very sorry to hear it. But then, again, a'n't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money lender?

Sir Peter T. Not at all; 'twould not be out of character if you went in your own carriage — would it, Moses?

Moses. Not in the least.

Sir Oliver S. Well, but how must I talk? There's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.

Sir Peter T. O! there's not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands — hey, Moses?

Moses. Yes, that's a very great point.

Sir Oliver S. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent. on the loan, at least.

Moses. If you ask him no more than that, you'll be discovered immediately.

Sir Oliver S. Hey! what the plague! How much, then?

Moses. That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent.; but if you find him in great distress, and want the moneys very bad, you may ask double.

Sir Peter T. A good honest trade you're learning, Sir Oliver!

Sir Oliver S. Truly, I think so; and not unprofitable.

Moses. Then, you know, you hav'n't the moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of an old friend.

Sir Oliver S. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

Moses. And your friend is an unconscionable dog; but you can't help that.

Sir Oliver S. My friend an unconscionable dog?

Moses. Yes, and he himself has not the moneys by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

Sir Oliver S. He is forced to sell stock at a great loss, is he? Well, that's very kind of him.

Sir Peter T. I' faith, Sir Oliver — Mr. Premium, I mean — you'll soon be master of the trade. But, Moses! would not you have him run out a little against the Annuity Bill? That would be in character, I should think.

Moses. Very much.

Rowley. And lament that a young man now must be at years of discretion before he is suffered to ruin himself?

Moses. Ay, great pity!

Sir Peter T. And abuse the public for allowing merit to an Act, whose only object is to snatch misfortune and imprudence from the rapacious gripe of usury, and give the minor a chance of inheriting his estate without being undone by coming into possession.

Sir Oliver S. So, so; Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

Sir Peter T. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

Sir Oliver S. O! never fear; my tutor appears so able, that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner.

(*Exeunt* Sir Oliver Surface *and* Moses.)

Sir Peter T. So now, I think Sir Oliver will be convinced. You are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

Rowley. No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

Sir Peter T. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say presently. I see Maria, and want to speak with her. (*Exit* Rowley.) I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph. I am determined I will do it; he will give me his opinion sincerely.

(*Enter* Maria.)

So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

Maria. No, sir; he was engaged.

Sir Peter T. Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

Maria. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely; you compel me to declare, that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention, whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

Sir Peter T. So, here's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

Maria. This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him. I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable, if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

Sir Peter T. Well, well, pity him as much as you please; but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Maria. Never to his brother!

Sir Peter T. Go, perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is. Don't compel me to inform you of it.

Maria. I can only say, you shall not have just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute; but must cease to think you so, when you would compel me to be miserable. (*Exit* Maria.)

Sir Peter T. Was ever man so crossed as I am? everything conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight, before her father, a hale and hearty man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter. But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good humour. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!

(*Enter* Lady Teazle.)

Lady T. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you hav'n't been quarrelling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill humored when I am not by.

Sir Peter T. Ah! Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good humoured at all times.

Lady T. I am sure I wish I had; for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at this moment. Do be good humoured now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

Sir Peter T. Two hundred pounds! What, a'n't I to be in a good humour without paying for it? But speak to me thus, and i' faith there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it; but seal me a bond for the repayment.

Lady T. O no — there. My note of hand will do as well. (*Offering her hand.*)

Sir Peter T. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly to surprise you. But shall we always live thus, hey?

Lady T. If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling, provided you'll own you were tired first.

Sir Peter T. Well, then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

Lady T. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you. You look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would; and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow, who would deny me nothing — didn't you?

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes; and you were as kind and attentive ——

Lady T. Ay, so I was, and would always take your part, when my acquaintance used to abuse you, and turn you into ridicule.

Sir Peter T. Indeed!

Lady T. Ay, and when my cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said, I didn't think you so ugly by any means, and I dared say you'd make a very good sort of a husband.

Sir Peter T. And you prophesied right; and we shall now be the happiest couple ——

Lady T. And never differ again?

Sir Peter T. No, never! Though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always began first.

Lady T. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter: indeed, you always gave the provocation.

Sir Peter T. Now see, my angel! take care; contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

Lady T. Then don't you begin it, my love!

Sir Peter T. There, now! you — you are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

Lady T. Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason, my dear ——

Sir Peter T. There! now you want to quarrel again.

Lady T. No, I am sure I don't; but if you will be so peevish ——

Sir Peter T. There now! who begins first?

Lady T. Why you, to be sure. I said nothing; but there's no bearing your temper.

Sir Peter T. No, no, madam; the fault's in your own temper.

Lady T. Ay, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

Sir Peter T. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.

Lady T. You are a great bear, I'm sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir Peter T. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more!

Lady T. So much the better.

Sir Peter T. No, no, madam; 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you — a pert, rural coquette, that had refused half the honest squires in the neighborhood.

Lady T. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you; an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty, only because he never could meet with any one who would have him.

Sir Peter T. Ay, ay, madam; but you were pleased enough to listen to me; you never had such an offer before.

Lady T. No! didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broke his neck since we have been married.

Sir Peter T. I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful — but there's an end to everything. I believe you capable of everything that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, *you* and Charles are — not without grounds ——

Lady T. Take care, Sir Peter; you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

Sir Peter T. Very well, madam!

very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

Lady T. Agreed, agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple, and never differ again, you know — ha! ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and shall only interrupt you; so, bye — bye. (*Exit.*)

Sir Peter T. Plagues and tortures! Can't I make her angry either! Oh, I am the most miserable fellow! but I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper; no! she may break my heart, but she sha'n't keep her temper. (*Exit.*)

Scene II. Charles Surface's *House*.

(*Enter* Trip, Moses, *and* Sir Oliver Surface.)

Trip. Here, Master Moses! if you'll stay a moment, I'll try whether — what's the gentleman's name?

Sir Oliver S. Mr. Moses, what is my name?

Moses. Mr. Premium.

Trip. Premium — very well.

(*Exit* Trip, *taking snuff.*)

Sir Oliver S. To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what! — sure, this was my brother's house?

Moses. Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, &c., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliver S. In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

(*Enter* Trip.)

Trip. My master says you must wait gentlemen; he has company, and can't speak with you yet.

Sir Oliver S. If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not send such a message?

Trip. Yes, yes, sir; he knows you are here. I did not forget little Premium; no, no, no.

Sir Oliver S. Very well; and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

Trip. Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliver S. Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess?

Trip. Why, yes; here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough; but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear — and not very great either — but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Bags and bouquets! halters and bastinadoes!

Trip. And, *à propos*, Moses; have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Wants to raise money too! mercy on me! Has his distresses too, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns.

Moses. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip.

Trip. Good lack, you surprise me! My friend Brush has indorsed it, and I thought when he put his name on the back of a bill 'twas the same as cash.

Moses. No! 'twouldn't do.

Trip. A small sum; but twenty pounds. Hark'ee Moses, do you think you couldn't get it me by way of annuity?

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. An annuity! ha! ha! a footman raise money by way of annuity! Well done, luxury, egad!

Moses. Well, but you must insure your place.

Trip. O with all my heart! I'll insure my place, and my life, too, if you please.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. It is more than I would your neck.

Moses. But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately; but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes, with equity of redemption before November; or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit on the blue and silver: these, I should think, Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles, as a collateral security; hey, my little fellow?

Moses. Well, well. (*Bell rings.*)

Trip. Egad, I heard the bell! I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you. Don't forget the annuity, little Moses! This way, gentlemen. I'll insure my place, you know.

Sir Oliver S. If the man be a shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene III.

(Charles Surface, [Sir Harry Bumper,] Careless, *&c.*, *&c.* [*discovered*] *at a table with wine, &c.*).

Charles S. 'Fore heaven, 'tis true! there's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but, plague on't, they won't drink.

Careless. It is so indeed, Charles! they give in to all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit. O certainly society suffers by it intolerably; for now, instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spa water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulence of Champagne, without the spirit of flavor.

1st Gent. But what are they to do who love play better than wine?

Careless. True; there's Sir Harry diets himself for gaming, and is now under a hazard regimen.

Charles S. Then he'll have the worst of it. What! you wouldn't train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn? For my part, egad, I am never so successful as when I am a little merry; let me throw on a bottle of Champagne, and I never lose; at least, I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

2nd Gent. Ay, that I believe.

Charles S. And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love, who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats atop is the maid that has bewitched you.

Careless. Now then, Charles, be honest, and give us your real favorite.

Charles S. Why, I have withheld her only in compassion to you. If I toast her, you must give a round of her peers, which is impossible — on earth.

Careless. Oh! then we'll find some canonized vestals or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant!

Charles S. Here then, bumpers, you rogues! bumpers! Maria! Maria!

Sir Harry B. Maria who?

Charles S. O damn the surname; 'tis too formal to be registered in Love's calendar; but now, Sir Harry, beware, we must have beauty superlative.

Careless. Nay, never study, Sir Harry; we'll stand to the toast, though your mistress should want an eye, and you know you have a song will excuse you.

Sir Harry B. Egad, so I have! and I'll give him the song instead of the lady.

SONG.

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen;
  Here's to the widow of fifty;
Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
  And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

Chorus. Let the toast pass,
  Drink to the lass,
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize;
  Now to the maid who has none, sir;
Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,
  And here's to the nymph with but *one*, sir.
Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow;
  Now to her that's as brown as a berry;
Here's to the wife with a face full of woe,
  And now to the girl that is merry.
Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,
  Young or ancient, I care not a feather;
So fill a pint bumper quite up to the brim,
  And let us e'en toast them together.
Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

All. Bravo! bravo!

(*Enter* Trip, *and whispers* Charles Surface.)

Charles S. Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little. Careless, take the chair, will you?

Careless. Nay, pr'ythee, Charles, what now? This is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose, has dropt in by chance?

Charles S. No, faith! To tell you the truth, 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

Careless. O damn it! let's have the Jew in.

1st Gent. Ay, and the broker too, by all means.

2nd Gent. Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker.

Charles S. Egad, with all my heart! Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in; though there's one of them a stranger, I can tell you.

Careless. Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy, and perhaps they'll grow conscientious.

Charles S. O hang 'em, no! wine does but draw forth a man's natural qualities, and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery.

(*Enter* Trip, Sir Oliver Surface, *and* Moses.)

Charles S. So, honest Moses, walk in; walk in, pray, Mr. Premium — that's the gentleman's name, isn't it, Moses?

Moses. Yes, sir.

Charles S. Set chairs, Trip — sit down, Mr. Premium — glasses, Trip — sit down, Moses. Come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment; here's *Success to usury!* Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

Moses. *Success to usury!*

Careless. Right, Moses; usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir Oliver S. Then, *here's all the success it deserves!*

Careless. No, no, that won't do! Mr. Premium, you have demurred at the toast, and must drink it in a pint bumper.

1st Gent. A pint bumper, at least.

Moses. O pray, sir, consider; Mr. Premium's a gentleman.

Careless. And therefore loves good wine.

2nd Gent. Give Moses a quart glass; this is mutiny, and a high contempt for the chair.

Careless. Here, now for't! I'll see justice done, to the last drop of my bottle.

Sir Oliver S. Nay, pray, gentlemen; I did not expect this usage.

Charles S. No, hang it, you sha'n't! Mr. Premium's a stranger.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Odd! I wish I was well out of their company.

Careless. Plague on 'em, then! if they don't drink, we'll not sit down with them. Come, Harry, the dice are in the next room. Charles, you'll join us when you have finished your business with the gentlemen!

Charles S. I will! I will! (*Exeunt*). Careless!

Careless (*returning*). Well!

Charles S. Perhaps I may want you.

Careless. O, you know I am always ready: word, note, or bond, 'tis all the same to me. (*Exit.*)

Moses. Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honor and secresy; and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is ——

Charles S. Pshaw! have done. Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression: he'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this: I am an extravagant young fellow who wants to borrow money; you I take to be a prudent old fellow, who have got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent. sooner than not have it; and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take a hundred if you can get it. Now, sir, you see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without further ceremony.

Sir Oliver S. Exceeding frank, upon my word. I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

Charles S. Oh no, sir! plain dealing in business I always think best.

Sir Oliver S. Sir, I like yon the better for it; however, you are mistaken in one thing; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend; but then he's an unconscionable dog, isn't he, Moses?

Moses. But you can't help that.

Sir Oliver S. And must sell stock to accommodate you — mustn't he, Moses?

Moses. Yes, indeed! You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie!

Charles S. Right. People that speak truth generally do: but these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What! I know money isn't to be bought without paying for 't!

Sir Oliver S. Well; but what security could you give? You have no land, I suppose?

Charles S. Not a molehill, nor a twig, but what's in the bough-pots out of the window!

Sir Oliver S. Nor any stock, I presume?

Charles S. Nothing but live stock, and that's only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connections?

Sir Oliver S. Why, to say truth, I am.

Charles S. Then you must know that I have a dev'lish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations?

Sir Oliver S. That you have a wealthy uncle I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

Charles S. O no! there can be no doubt. They tell me I'm a prodigious favorite, and that he talks of leaving me everything.

Sir Oliver S. Indeed! this is the first I've heard of it.

Charles S. Yes, yes, 'tis just so. Moses knows 'tis true; don't you, Moses?

Moses. O yes! I'll swear to't.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal.

Charles S. Now, I propose, Mr. Premium, if it's agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life; though at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me, that I give you my word, I should be very sorry to hear that anything had happened to him.

Sir Oliver S. Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me, for I might live to a hundred, and never see the principal.

Charles S. Oh yes, you would; the moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you would come on me for the money.

Sir Oliver S. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

Charles S. What! I suppose you're afraid that Sir Oliver is too good a life?

Sir Oliver S. No, indeed, I am not; though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

Charles S. There again now you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor uncle Oliver! Yes, yes, he breaks apace, I'm told, and is so much altered lately, that his nearest relations don't know him.

Sir Oliver S. No! ha! ha! ha! so much altered lately, that his nearest relations don't know him! ha! ha! ha! egad — ha! ha! ha!

Charles S. Ha! ha! you're glad to hear that, little Premium?

Sir Oliver S. No, no, I'm not.

Charles S. Yes, yes, you are — ha! ha! ha! You know that mends your chance.

Sir Oliver S. But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over? Nay, some say he is actually arrived?

Charles S. Pshaw! Sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no; rely on't, he's at this moment at Calcutta. Isn't he, Moses?

Moses. O yes, certainly.

Sir Oliver S. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority. Haven't I, Moses?

Moses. Yes, most undoubted!

Sir Oliver S. But, sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing you could dispose of?

Charles S. How do you mean?

Sir Oliver S. For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massive old plate?

Charles S. O Lud! that's gone long ago. Moses can tell you how better than I can.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Good lack! all the family race-cups and corporation-bowls! — Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and compact ——

Charles S. Yes, yes, so it was — vastly too much so for a private gentleman. For my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Mercy upon me! Learning that had run in the family like an heirloom! — Pray, what are become of the books?

Charles S. You must enquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you.

Moses. I know nothing of books.

Sir Oliver S. So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

Charles S. Not much, indeed; unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors above, and if you have a taste for paintings, egad, you shall have 'em a bargain.

Sir Oliver S. Hey! what the devil! sure, you wouldn't sell your forefathers, would you?

Charles S. Every man of them to the best bidder.

Sir Oliver S. What! your great uncles and aunts?

Charles S. Ay, and my great grandfathers and grandmothers too.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Now I give him up. — What the plague, have you no bowels for your own kindred? Odd's life, do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

Charles S. Nay, my little broker, don't be angry: what need you care if you have your money's worth?

Sir Oliver S. Well, I'll be the purchaser: I think I can dispose of the family canvas. —— [*Aside.*] Oh, I'll never forgive him this! never!

(*Enter* Careless.)

Careless. Come, Charles, what keeps you?

Charles S. I can't come yet: i'faith we are going to have a sale above stairs; here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors.

Careless. O, burn your ancestors!

Charles S. No, he may do that afterwards, if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you; egad, you shall be auctioneer; so come along with us.

Careless. Oh, have with you, if that's the case. [I can] handle a hammer as well as a dice-box!

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Oh, the profligates!

Charles S. Come, Moses, you shall be appraiser, if we want one. Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business?

Sir Oliver S. O yes, I do, vastly. Ha! ha! ha! yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction — ha! ha! — [*Aside.*] O the prodigal!

Charles S. To be sure! when a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance if he can't make free with his own relations?

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

Scene I. *Picture Room at* Charles's.

(*Enter* Charles Surface, Sir Oliver Surface, Moses, *and* Careless.)

Charles S. Walk in, gentlemen; pray walk in. Here they are, the family of the Surfaces, up to the Conquest.

Sir Oliver S. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Charles S. Ay, ay; these are done in the true spirit of portrait painting; no *volontier*[e] *grace* and expression. Not like the works of your modern Raphaels, who give you the strongest resemblance, yet contrive to make your portrait independent of you; so that you may sink the original and not hurt the picture. No, no; the merit of these is the inveterate likeness — all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature besides.

Sir Oliver S. Ah! we shall never see such figures of men again.

Charles S. I hope not. Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am. Here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family. But come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer; here's an old gouty chair of my father's will answer the purpose.

Careless. Ay, ay, this will do. But, Charles, I hav'n't a hammer; and what's an auctioneer without his hammer?

Charles S. Egad, that's true. What parchment have we here? O, our genealogy in full. Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany; here's the family tree, for you, you rogue; this shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. What an unnatural rogue! an *ex post facto* parricide!

Careless. Yes, yes, here's a bit of your generation indeed; faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 'twill serve not only as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. Come, begin, — A-going, a-going, a-going!

Charles S. Bravo, Careless! Well, here's my great uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet. What say you, Mr. Premium? look at him; there's a hero, not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipp'd captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be. What do you bid?

Moses. Mr. Premium would have *you* speak.

Charles S. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff-officer.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds! — Well, sir, I take him at that.

Charles S. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard. Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great aunt Deborah, done by Kneller, thought to be in his best manner, and a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten; the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Ah! poor Deborah; a woman who set such a value on herself! — Five pounds ten; she's mine.

Charles S. Knock down my aunt Deborah! Here, now, are two that were a sort of cousins of theirs. You see, Moses, these pictures were done sometime ago, when beaux wore wigs, and the ladies their own hair.

Sir Oliver S. Yes, truly, headdresses appear to have been a little lower in those days.

Charles S. Well, take that couple for the same.

Moses. 'Tis good bargain.

Charles S. Careless! This, now, is a grandfather of my mother, a learned judge, well known on the Western Circuit. What do you rate him at, Moses?

Moses. Four guineas.

Charles S. Four guineas! Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig. Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the woolsack; do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

Sir Oliver S. By all means.

Careless. Gone!

Charles S. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of parliament, and noted speakers, and what's very extraordinary, I believe, this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

Sir Oliver S. That is very extraordinary, indeed! I'll take them at your own price, for the honor of Parliament.

Careless. Well said, little Premium! I'll knock them down at forty.

Charles S. Here's a jolly fellow; I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Manchester. Take him at eight pounds.

Sir Oliver S. No, no; six will do for the mayor.

Charles S. Come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen there into the bargain.

Sir Oliver S. They're mine.

Charles S. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen. But, plague on't, we shall be all day retailing in this manner. Do let us deal wholesale; what say you, little Premium? Give us three hundred pounds for the rest of the family in the lump.

Careless. Ay, ay, that will be the best way.

Sir Oliver S. Well, well, anything to accommodate you — they are mine. But there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

Careless. What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee?

Sir Oliver S. Yes, sir, I mean that; though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow, by any means.

Charles S. What, that? Oh! that's my uncle Oliver; 'twas done before he went to India.

Careless. Your uncle Oliver! Gad, then, you'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw — an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance! an inveterate knave, depend on't. Don't you think so, little Premium?

Sir Oliver S. Upon my soul, sir, I do not. I think it is as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. But I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

Charles S. No, hang it! I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and, egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. The rogue's my nephew after all! — But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Charles S. I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, haven't you got enough of them?

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. I forgive him everything! — But, sir, when I take a whim in my head I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Charles S. Don't tease me, master broker. I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. How like his father the dog is! — Well, well, I have done. — [*Aside.*] I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a striking resemblance. — Here is a draft for your sum.

Charles S. Why, 'tis for eight hundred pounds.

Sir Oliver S. You will not let Sir Oliver go?

Charles S. Zounds! no! I tell you once more.

Sir Oliver S. Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that another time. But give me your hand on the bargain; you are an honest fellow, Charles. I beg pardon, sir, for being so free. Come, Moses.

Charles S. Egad, this is a whimsical old fellow! But hark'ee, Premium, you'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen?

Sir Oliver S. Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

Charles S. But, hold; do now send a genteel conveyance for them, for, I assure you, they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oliver S. I will, I will; for all but Oliver.

Charles S. Ay, all but the little nabob.

Sir Oliver S. You're fixed on that?

Charles S. Peremptorily.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. A dear extravagant rogue! — Good day! Come, Moses. Let me hear now who calls him profligate!

(*Exeunt* Sir Oliver Surface *and* Moses.)

Careless. Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever saw!

Charles S. Egad! he's the prince of brokers, I think. I wonder how Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow. Ha!

here's Rowley; do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a few moments.

Careless. I will; but don't let that old blockhead persuade you to squander any of that money on old musty debts, or any such nonsense; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

Charles S. Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them.

Careless. Nothing else.

Charles S. Ay, ay, never fear. (*Exit* Careless.) So! this was an odd old fellow, indeed. Let me see; two-thirds of this is mine by right, five hundred and thirty odd pounds. 'Fore heaven! I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for! Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful servant.

(*Enter* Rowley.)

Ha! old Rowley; egad, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintance.

Rowley. Yes, I heard they were a-going. But I wonder you can have such spirits under so many distresses.

Charles S. Why, there's the point! my distresses are so many, that I can't afford to part with my spirits; but I shall be rich and splenetic, all in good time. However, I suppose you are surprised that I am not more sorrowful at parting with so many near relations; to be sure 'tis very affecting; but you see they never move a muscle, so why should I?

Rowley. There's no making you serious a moment.

Charles S. Yes, faith, I am so now. Here, my honest Rowley, here, get me this changed directly, and take a hundred pounds of it immediately to old Stanley.

Rowley. A hundred pounds! Consider only ——

Charles S. Gad's life, don't talk about it; poor Stanley's wants are pressing, and if you don't make haste, we shall have some one call that has a better right to the money.

Rowley. Ah! there's the point! I never will cease dunning you with the old proverb ——

Charles S. "Be just before you're generous." Why, so I would if I could; but Justice is an old, lame, hobbling beldame, and I can't get her to keep pace with Generosity for the soul of me.

Rowley. Yet, Charles, believe me, one hour's reflection ——

Charles S. Ay, ay, it's all very true; but, hark'ee, Rowley, while I have, by heaven, I'll give; so damn your economy, and now for hazard. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene II. *The Parlour.*

(*Enter* Sir Oliver Surface *and* Moses.)

Moses. Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles in high glory; 'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

Sir Oliver S. True, but he would not sell my picture.

Moses. And loves wine and women so much.

Sir Oliver S. But he would not sell my picture.

Moses. And games so deep.

Sir Oliver S. But he would not sell my picture. O, here's Rowley.

(*Enter* Rowley.)

Rowley. So, Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase ——

Sir Oliver S. Yes, yes; our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Rowley. And here has he commissioned me to re-deliver you part of the purchase money. I mean, though, in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

Moses. Ah! there is the pity of it all; he is so damned charitable.

Rowley. And I left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who, I'm sure, won't be paid, and this hundred would satisfy them.

Sir Oliver S. Well, well, I'll pay his debts, and his benevolence too. But now I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Rowley. Not yet a while; Sir Peter, I know, means to call there about this time.

(*Enter* Trip.)

Trip. O, gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out; this way. Moses, a word.

(*Exeunt* Trip *and* Moses.)

Sir Oliver S. There's a fellow for you! Would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master.

Rowley. Indeed!

Sir Oliver S. Yes, they are now planning an annuity business. Ah! Master Rowley, in my days servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were worn a little threadbare; but now, they have their vices, like their birthday clothes, with the gloss on.

(*Exeunt.*)

Scene III. *A Library.*

([*Discovered*] Joseph Surface *and a Servant.*)

Joseph S. No letter from Lady Teazle?

Serv. No, sir.

Joseph S. I am surprised she has not sent, if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet, I wish I may not lose the heiress, through the scrape I have drawn myself into with the wife; however, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor.

(*Knocking heard without.*)

Serv. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

Joseph S. Hold! See whether it is or not before you go to the door: I have a particular message for you, if it should be my brother.

Serv. 'Tis her ladyship, sir; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.

Joseph S. Stay, stay; draw that screen before the window — that will do; my opposite neighbor is a maiden lady of so anxious a temper. (*Servant draws the screen, and exit.*) I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria; but she must by no means be let into that secret — at least, till I have her more in my power.

(*Enter* Lady Teazle.)

Lady T. What, sentiment in soliloquy now? Have you been very impatient? O Lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I couldn't come before.

Joseph S. O, madam, punctuality is a species of constancy, a very unfashionable quality in a lady.

Lady T. Upon my word you ought to pity me. Do you know, Sir Peter is grown so ill-natured to me of late, and so jealous of Charles too; that's the best of the story, isn't it?

Joseph S. [*aside*]. I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up.

Lady T. I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced. Don't you, Mr. Surface?

Joseph S. [*aside*]. Indeed I do not. — Oh, certainly I do! for then my dear Lady Teazle would also be convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

Lady T. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking, to have the most ill-natured things said of one? And there's my friend, Lady Sneerwell, has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and all without any foundation too; that's what vexes me.

Joseph S. Ay, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance — without foundation. Yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed; for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

Lady T. No, to be sure, then I'd forgive their malice; but to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody — that is, of any friend; and then Sir Peter too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart! indeed 'tis monstrous!

Joseph S. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken, and she owes it to the honor of her sex to outwit him.

Lady T. Indeed! so that if he suspects me without cause, it follows, that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't.

Joseph S. Undoubtedly; for your husband should never be deceived in you; and in that case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

Lady T. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my innocence ——

Joseph S. Ah! my dear madam, there is the great mistake: 'tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms, and careless of the world's opinion? Why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your own conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences? Why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper, and outrageous of his suspicions? Why, the consciousness of your innocence.

Lady T. 'Tis very true!

Joseph S. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas*, you can't conceive how cautious you would grow, and how ready to humor and agree with your husband.

Lady T. Do you think so?

Joseph S. Oh! I'm sure on't; and then you would find all scandal would cease at once; for, in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

Lady T. So, so; then I perceive your prescription is, that I must sin in my own defence, and part with my virtue to secure my reputation?

Joseph S. Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

Lady T. Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

Joseph S. An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

Lady T. Why, if my understanding were once convinced ——

Joseph S. O, certainly, madam, your understanding should be convinced. Yes, yes; heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honor to desire it.

Lady T. Don't you think we may as well leave *honor* out of the question?

Joseph S. Ah! the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

Lady T. I doubt they do indeed; and I will fairly own to you, that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill usage sooner than your *honorable logic*, after all.

Joseph S. Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of — (*Taking her hand.*)

Enter Servant.

'Sdeath, you blockhead! What do you want?

Serv. I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

Joseph S. Sir Peter! Oons — the devil!

Lady T. Sir Peter! O Lud, I'm ruined! I'm ruined!

Serv. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

Lady T. Oh, I'm quite undone! What will become of me? Now, Mr. Logic. Oh! he's on the stairs. I'll get behind here; and if ever I'm so imprudent again ——

(*Goes behind the screen.*)

Joseph S. Give me that book.

(*Sits down. Servant pretends to adjust his hair.*)

(*Enter* Sir Peter.)

Sir Peter T. Ay, ever improving himself. Mr. Surface! Mr. Surface!

Joseph S. Oh! my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon. (*Gaping, throws away the book.*) I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. Books, you know, are the only things in which I am a coxcomb.

Sir Peter T. 'Tis very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you can make even your screen a source of knowledge; hung, I perceive, with maps.

Joseph S. O, yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir Peter T. I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry.

Joseph S. (*aside*). Ay, or to hide anything in a hurry, either.

Sir Peter T. Well, I have a little private business —

Joseph S. (*to the Servant*). You need not stay.

Serv. No, sir.

(*Exit.*)

Joseph S. Here's a chair, Sir Peter. I beg ——

Sir Peter T. Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you — a point of the greatest moment to my peace; in short, my dear friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me extremely unhappy.

Joseph S. Indeed! I am very sorry to to hear it.

Sir Peter T. Ay, 'tis too plain she has not the least regard for me; but, what's worse, I have pretty good authority to suppose she has formed an attachment to another.

Joseph S. Indeed! you astonish me!

Sir Peter T. Yes; and, between ourselves, I think I've discovered the person.

Joseph S. How! you alarm me exceedingly.

Sir Peter T. Ay, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me!

Joseph S. Yes, believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

Sir Peter T. I am convinced of it. Ah! it is a happiness to have a friend whom we can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean?

Joseph S. I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

Sir Peter T. Oh, no! What say you to Charles?

Joseph S. My brother! impossible!

Sir Peter T. Oh! my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

Joseph S. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

Sir Peter T. True; but your brother has no sentiment; you never hear him talk so.

Joseph S. Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

Sir Peter T. Ay; but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

Joseph S. That's very true.

Sir Peter T. And there's, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any very great affection for me; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor, who had married a girl.

Joseph S. That's true, to be sure; they would laugh.

Sir Peter T. Laugh — ay, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

Joseph S. No; you must never make it public.

Sir Peter T. But then again — that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

Joseph S. Ay, there's the point. When ingratitude barbs the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

Sir Peter T. Ay, I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian; in whose house he had been so often entertained; who never in my life denied him — my advice.

Joseph S. O, 'tis not to be credited. There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but, for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine. I disclaim kindred with him; for the man who can break the laws of hospitality, and tempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

Sir Peter T. What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

JOSEPH S. Yet, I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

SIR PETER T. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her; and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall have her own way, and be her own mistress in that respect for the future; and if I were to die, she will find I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of the two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune at my death.

JOSEPH S. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous. — [*Aside*]. I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.

SIR PETER T. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet awhile.

JOSEPH S. [*aside*]. Nor I, if I could help it.

SIR PETER T. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your affairs with Maria.

JOSEPH S. (*softly*). O, no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

SIR PETER T. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

JOSEPH S. [*softly*]. I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate! — [*Aside*]. 'Sdeath, I shall be ruined every way.

SIR PETER T. And though you are so averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion for Maria, I'm sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

JOSEPH S. Pray, Sir Peter, now, oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of, to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is intrusted with his friend's distresses can never ——

(*Enter Servant.*)

Well, sir?

SERV. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

JOSEPH S. 'Sdeath, blockhead, I'm not within; I'm out for the day.

SIR PETER T. Stay — hold — a thought has struck me: you shall be at home.

JOSEPH S. Well, well, let him up.

(*Exit Servant.*)

[*Aside.*] He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however.

SIR PETER T. Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere; then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.

JOSEPH S. O fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick? — to trepan my brother, too?

SIR PETER T. Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me; here, behind this screen will be — Hey! what the devil! there seems to be one listener there already. I'll swear I saw a petticoat!

JOSEPH S. Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph either! Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner — a silly rogue that plagues me — and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

SIR PETER T. Ah! you rogue! But egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

JOSEPH S. O, 'twill never go any farther, you may depend upon it.

SIR PETER T. No; then, faith, let her hear it out. Here's a closet will do as well.

JOSEPH S. Well, go in there.

SIR PETER T. Sly rogue! sly rogue!

(*Going into the closet.*)

Joseph S. A narrow escape, indeed! and a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

Lady T. (*peeping*). Couldn't I steal off?

Joseph S. Keep close, my angel!

Sir Peter T. (*peeping*). Joseph, tax him home.

Joseph S. Back, my dear friend!

Lady T. [*peeping*]. Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

Joseph S. Be still, my life!

Sir Peter T. (*peeping*). You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

Joseph S. In, in, my good Sir Peter. [*Aside.*] 'Fore Gad, I wish I had a key to the door.

(*Enter* Charles Surface.)

Charles S. Holloa! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Joseph S. Neither, brother, I assure you.

Charles S. But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

Joseph S. He *was*, brother; but hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

Charles S. What! was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

Joseph S. No, sir; but I am sorry to find, Charles, you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

Charles S. Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men. But how so, pray?

Joseph S. To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

Charles S. Who, I? O Lud! not I, upon my word. Ha! ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he? Or, what is worse, Lady Teazle has found out she has an old husband?

Joseph S. This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh ——

Charles S. True, true, as you were going to say — then, seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

Joseph S. [*raising his voice*]. Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.

Charles S. To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement; besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

Joseph S. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you ——

Charles S. Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action; but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way; and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father ——

Joseph S. Well ——

Charles S. Why, I believe I should be obliged to borrow a little of your morality, that's all. But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly, by naming *me* with Lady Teazle? for, 'faith, I always understood you were her favorite.

Joseph S. O, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

Charles S. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances ——

Joseph S. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

Charles S. Egad, I'm serious. Don't you remember one day when I called here ——

Joseph S. Nay, prithee, Charles ——

Charles S. And found you together ——

Joseph S. Zounds, sir! I insist ——

Charles S. And another time when your servant ——

Joseph S. Brother, brother, a word with you! —— [*Aside.*] Gad, I must stop him.

Charles S. Informed, I say, that ——

Joseph S. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying. I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

Charles S. How, Sir Peter! Where is he?

Joseph S. Softly; there!

(*Points to the closet.*)

Charles S. O, 'fore heaven, I'll have him out. Sir Peter, come forth!

Joseph S. No, no ——

Charles S. I say, Sir Peter, come into court. (*Pulls in* Sir Peter.) What! my old guardian! What! turn inquisitor, and take evidence incog.?

Sir Peter T. Give me your hand, Charles. I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph; 'twas my plan!

Charles S. Indeed!

Sir Peter T. But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did. What I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

Charles S. Egad, then, 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more; [*apart to* Joseph] wasn't it, Joseph?

Sir Peter T. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

Charles S. Ay, ay, that was a joke.

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

Charles S. But you might as well have suspected *him* as *me* in this matter, for all that; [*apart to* Joseph] mightn't he, Joseph?

Sir Peter T. Well, well, I believe you.

Joseph S. [*aside*]. Would they were both well out of the room!

(*Enter Servant, and whispers* Joseph Surface.)

Sir Peter T. And in future perhaps we may not be such strangers.

Joseph S. Gentlemen, I beg pardon, I must wait on you downstairs; here is a person come on particular business.

Charles S. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Joseph S. [*aside*]. They must not be left together. — I'll send this man away, and return directly. [*Apart to* Sir Peter.] Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

Sir Peter T. [*Apart to* Joseph.] I! not for the world — [*Exit* Joseph.] Ah! Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Charles S. Pshaw! he is too moral by half, and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a girl.

Sir Peter T. No, no; come, come; you wrong him. No, no! Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either in that respect. — [*Aside.*] I have a great mind to tell him; we should have a laugh at Joseph.

Charles S. Oh, hang him! He's a very anchorite, a young hermit.

Sir Peter T. Hark'ee; you must not abuse him; he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

Charles S. Why, you won't tell him?

Sir Peter T. No — but — this way. [*Aside.*] Egad, I'll tell him. — Hark'ee; have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

Charles S. I should like it of all things.

Sir Peter T. Then, i'faith, we will; I'll be quit with him for discovering me. He had a girl with him when I called.

Charles S. What! Joseph? you jest.

Sir Peter T. Hush! a little French milliner, and the best of the jest is, she's in the room now.

Charles S. The devil she is!

Sir Peter T. Hush! I tell you! (*Points.*)

Charles S. Behind the screen! 'Slife, let's unveil her!

Sir Peter T. No, no — he's coming — you sha'n't, indeed!

Charles S. O, egad, we'll have a peep at the little milliner!

Sir Peter T. Not for the world; Joseph will never forgive me ——

Charles S. I'll stand by you ——

Sir Peter T. Odds, here he is.

(Joseph Surface *enters just as* Charles Surface *throws down the screen.*)

Charles S. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

Sir Peter T. Lady Teazle, by all that's damnable!

Charles S. Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw.

Egad, you seem all to have been diverting yourselves here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? Not a word! Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What! is Morality dumb too? Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute! Well, though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another, so I'll leave you to yourselves. (*Going.*) Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man cause for so much uneasiness. Sir Peter! there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment! (*Exit* CHARLES.)

(*They stand for some time looking at each other.*)

JOSEPH S. Sir Peter — notwithstanding — I confess — that appearances are against me — if you will afford me your patience — I make no doubt — but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

SIR PETER T. If you please, sir.

JOSEPH S. The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward Maria — I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper — and knowing my friendship to the family — She, sir, I say — called here — in order that — I might explain these pretensions — but on your coming — being apprehensive — as I said — of your jealousy — she withdrew — and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

SIR PETER T. A very clear account, upon my word; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

LADY T. For not one word of it, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER T. How! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

LADY T. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

SIR PETER T. I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am!

JOSEPH S. [*aside to* LADY TEAZLE]. 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

LADY T. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I'll speak for myself.

SIR PETER T. Ay, let her alone, sir; you'll find she'll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

LADY T. Hear me, Sir Peter! I came hither on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of this gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honor to his baseness.

SIR PETER T. Now, I believe, the truth is coming indeed!

JOSEPH S. The woman's mad!

LADY T. No, sir, she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means. Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me, but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has penetrated so to my heart, that had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected honorable addresses to his ward, I behold him now in a light so truly despicable, that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him. (*Exit* LADY TEAZLE.)

JOSEPH S. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, Heaven knows ——

SIR PETER T. That you are a villain! and so I leave you to your conscience.

JOSEPH S. You are too rash, Sir Peter; you shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to ——

(*Exeunt* SIR PETER *and* SURFACE *talking.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I. *The Library* [*in* JOSEPH SURFACE'S *House*].

(*Enter* JOSEPH SURFACE *and Servant.*)

JOSEPH S. Mr. Stanley? and why should you think I would see him? you must know he comes to ask something.

SERV. Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

Joseph S. Pshaw! blockhead! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations! Well, why don't you show the fellow up?

Serv. I will, sir. Why, sir, it was not my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady ——

Joseph S. Go, fool! (*Exit Servant.*) Sure Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before. My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment! I'm in a rare humor to listen to other people's distresses! I sha'n't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley. So! here he comes, and Rowley with him. I must try to recover myself, and put a little charity into my face, however. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* Sir Oliver Surface *and* Rowley.)

Sir Oliver S. What! does he avoid us? That was he, was it not?

Rowley. It was, sir. But I doubt you are come a little too abruptly. His nerves are so weak, that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. I should have gone first to break it to him.

Sir Oliver S. O, plague of his nerves! Yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking!

Rowley. As to his way of thinking, I cannot pretend to decide; for, to do him justice, he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir Oliver S. Yet has a string of charitable sentiments at his fingers' ends.

Rowley. Or rather at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he has such faith in, as that "Charity begins at home."

Sir Oliver S. And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort which never stirs abroad at all?

Rowley. I doubt you'll find it so; but he's coming. I mustn't seem to interrupt you; and, you know, immediately as you leave him, I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

Sir Oliver S. True; and afterwards you'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

Rowley. Without losing a moment. (*Exit.*)

Sir Oliver S. I don't like the complaisance of his features.

(*Enter* Joseph Surface.)

Joseph S. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting. Mr. Stanley, I presume.

Sir Oliver S. At your service.

Joseph S. Sir, I beg you will do me the honor to sit down. I entreat you, sir!

Sir Oliver S. Dear sir, there's no occasion. — [*Aside.*] Too civil by half!

Joseph S. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley, but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, I think, Mr. Stanley?

Sir Oliver S. I was, sir; so nearly, that my present poverty, I fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

Joseph S. Dear sir, there needs no apology; he that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I am sure I wish I was of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

Sir Oliver S. If your uncle, Sir Oliver, were here, I should have a friend.

Joseph S. I wish he was, sir, with all my heart: you should not want an advocate with him, believe me, sir.

Sir Oliver S. I should not need one — my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty would enable you to become the agent of his charity.

Joseph S. My dear sir, you were strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man, a very worthy man; but avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age. I will tell you, my good sir, in confidence, what he has done for me has been a mere nothing; though people, I know, have thought otherwise, and, for my part, I never chose to contradict the report.

Sir Oliver S. What! has he never transmitted you bullion — rupees — pagodas?

Joseph S. O, dear sir, nothing of

the kind. No, no; a few presents, now and then — china, shawls, congou tea, avadavats, and Indian crackers; little more, believe me.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Here's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds! Avadavats and Indian crackers!

Joseph S. Then, my dear sir, you have heard, I doubt not, of the extravagance of my brother; there are very few would credit what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Not I, for one!

Joseph S. The sums I have lent him! Indeed I have been exceedingly to blame; it was an amiable weakness; however, I don't pretend to defend it; and now I feel it doubly culpable, since it has deprived me of the pleasure of serving you, Mr. Stanley, as my heart dictates.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Dissembler! — Then, sir, you can't assist me?

Joseph S. At present, it grieves me to say, I cannot; but, whenever I have the ability, you may depend upon hearing from me.

Sir Oliver S. I am extremely sorry ——

Joseph S. Not more than I, believe me; to pity without the power to relieve, is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

Sir Oliver S. Kind sir, your most obedient humble servant.

Joseph S. You leave me deeply affected, Mr. Stanley. William, be ready to open the door.

Sir Oliver S. O, dear sir, no ceremony.

Joseph S. Your very obedient.

Sir Oliver S. Sir, your most obsequious.

Joseph S. You may depend upon hearing from me, whenever I can be of service.

Sir Oliver S. Sweet sir, you are too good!

Joseph S. In the mean time I wish you health and spirits.

Sir Oliver S. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

Joseph S. Sir, yours as sincerely.

Sir Oliver S. [*aside*]. Charles, you are my heir!

(*Exit.*)

Joseph S. This is one bad effect of a good character; it invites application from the unfortunate, and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense. The silver ore of pure charity is an expensive article in the catalogue of a man's good qualities; whereas the sentimental French plate I use instead of it, makes just as good a show, and pays no tax.

(*Enter* Rowley.)

Rowley. Mr. Surface, your servant. I was apprehensive of interrupting you, though my business demands immediate attention, as this note will inform you.

Joseph S. Always happy to see Mr. Rowley. (*Reads the letter.*) Sir Oliver Surface! My uncle arrived!

Rowley. He is, indeed; we have just parted — quite well, after a speedy voyage, and impatient to embrace his worthy nephew.

Joseph S. I am astonished! William! stop Mr. Stanley, if he's not gone.

Rowley. Oh! he's out of reach, I believe.

Joseph S. Why did you not let me know this when you came in together?

Rowley. I thought you had particular business; but I must be gone to inform your brother, and appoint him here to meet your uncle. He will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

Joseph S. So he says. Well, I am strangely overjoyed at his coming. — [*Aside.*] Never, to be sure, was anything so damned unlucky.

Rowley. You will be delighted to see how well he looks.

Joseph S. Ah! I'm rejoiced to hear it. —— [*Aside.*] Just at this time!

Rowley. I'll tell him how impatiently you expect him.

Joseph S. Do, do; pray give my best duty and affection. Indeed, I cannot express the sensations I feel at the thought of seeing him. (*Exit* Rowley.) Certainly his coming just at this time is the cruelest piece of ill fortune! (*Exit.*)

Scene II. Sir Peter Teazle's.

(*Enter* Mrs. Candour *and Maid.*)

Maid. Indeed, ma'am, my lady will see nobody at present.

Mrs. Can. Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs. Candour?

Maid. Yes, ma'am; but she begs you will excuse her.

Mrs. Can. Do go again; I shall be glad to see her, if it be only for a moment, for I am sure she must be in great distress. (*Exit Maid.*) Dear heart, how provoking! I'm not mistress of half the circumstances! We shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the names of the parties at length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

(*Enter* Sir Benjamin Backbite.)

Oh, Sir Benjamin, you have heard, I suppose ——

Sir Benj. B. Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface ——

Mrs. Can. And Sir Peter's discovery ——

Sir Benj. B. O! the strangest piece of business, to be sure!

Mrs. Can. Well, I never was so surprised in my life. I am so sorry for all parties, indeed.

Sir Benj. B. Now, I don't pity Sir Peter at all; he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.

Mrs. Can. Mr. Surface! Why, 'twas with Charles Lady Teazle was detected.

Sir Benj. B. No, no, I tell you; Mr. Surface is the gallant.

Mrs. Can. No such thing! Charles is the man. 'Twas Mr. Surface brought Sir Peter on purpose to discover them.

Sir Benj. B. I tell you I had it from one —

Mrs. Can. And I have it from one —

Sir Benj. B. Who had it from one, who had it —

Mrs. Can. From one immediately — but here comes Lady Sneerwell; perhaps she knows the whole affair.

(*Enter* Lady Sneerwell.)

Lady Sneer. So, my dear Mrs. Candour, here's a sad affair of our friend, Lady Teazle.

Mrs. Can. Ay, my dear friend, who would have thought ——

Lady Sneer. Well, there is no trusting appearances; though, indeed, she was always too lively for me.

Mrs. Can. To be sure, her manners were a little too free; but then she was young!

Lady Sneer. And had, indeed, some good qualities.

Mrs. Can. So she had, indeed. But have you heard the particulars?

Lady Sneer. No; but everybody says that Mr. Surface ——

Sir Benj. B. Ay, there; I told you Mr. Surface was the man.

Mrs. Can. No, no; indeed the assignation was with Charles.

Lady Sneer. With Charles! You alarm me, Mrs. Candour!

Mrs. Can. Yes, yes, he was the lover. Mr. Surface, to do him justice, was only the informer.

Sir Benj. B. Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; but, be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not ——

Mrs. Can. Sir Peter's wound! O, mercy! I didn't hear a word of their fighting.

Lady Sneer. Nor I, a syllable.

Sir Benj. B. No! what, no mention of the duel?

Mrs. Can. Not a word.

Sir Benj. B. O, yes; they fought before they left the room.

Lady Sneer. Pray, let us hear.

Mrs. Can. Ay, do oblige us with the duel.

Sir Benj. B. "Sir," says Sir Peter, immediately after the discovery, "you are a most ungrateful fellow."

Mrs. Can. Ay, to Charles.

Sir Benj. B. No, no, to Mr. Surface — "a most ungrateful fellow; and, old as I am, sir," says he, "I insist on immediate satisfaction."

Mrs. Can. Ay, that must have been to Charles; for 'tis very unlikely Mr. Surface should fight in his own house.

Sir Benj. B. Gad's life, ma'am, not at all. "Giving me satisfaction." On this, ma'am, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and Charles after her, calling out for hartshorn and water; then, madam, they began to fight with swords.

(*Enter* Crabtree.)

Crabt. With pistols, nephew — pistols. I have it from undoubted authority.

Mrs. Can. O, Mr. Crabtree, then it is all true!

Crabt. Too true, indeed, madam, and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded —

Sir Benj. B. By a thrust in second quite through his left side ——

Crabt. By a bullet lodged in the thorax.

Mrs. Can. Mercy on me! Poor Sir Peter!

Crabt. Yes, madam; though Charles would have avoided the matter, if he could.

Mrs. Can. I knew Charles was the person.

Sir Benj. B. My uncle, I see, knows nothing of the matter.

Crabt. But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude.

Sir Benj. B. That I told you, you know —

Crabt. Do, nephew, let me speak! and insisted on immediate —

Sir Benj. B. Just as I said —

Crabt. Odds life, nephew, allow others to know something too. A pair of pistols lay on the bureau (for Mr. Surface, it seems, had come home the night before late from Salthill, where he had been to see the Montem with a friend, who has a son at Eton), so, unluckily, the pistols were left charged.

Sir Benj. B. I heard nothing of this.

Crabt. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one, and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles's shot took effect as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed; but what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the fireplace, grazed out of the window, at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

Sir Benj. B. My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I confess; but I believe mine is the true one, for all that.

Lady Sneer. [*aside*]. I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information.

(*Exit* Lady Sneerwell.)

Sir Benj. B. Ah! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crabt. Yes, yes, they certainly do say; but that's neither here nor there.

Mrs. Can. But, pray, where is Sir Peter at present?

Crabt. Oh! they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny him.

Mrs. Can. I believe so, and Lady Teazle, I suppose, attending him.

Crabt. Yes, yes; and I saw one of the faculty enter just before me.

Sir Benj. B. Hey, who comes here?

Crabt. O, this is he: the physician, depend on't.

Mrs. Can. O, certainly: it must be the physician; and now we shall know.

(*Enter* Sir Oliver Surface.)

Crabt. Well, doctor, what hopes?

Mrs. Can. Ah, doctor, how's your patient?

Sir Benj. B. Now, doctor, isn't it a wound with a small sword?

Crabt. A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred!

Sir Oliver S. Doctor! a wound with a small sword! and a bullet in the thorax! Oons! are you mad, good people?

Sir Benj. B. Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

Sir Oliver S. Truly, I am to thank you for my degree if I am.

Crabt. Only a friend of Sir Peter's, then, I presume. But, sir, you must have heard of his accident?

Sir Oliver S. Not a word!

Crabt. Not of his being dangerously wounded?

Sir Oliver S. The devil he is!

Sir Benj. B. Run through the body ——

Crabt. Shot in the breast ——

Sir Benj. B. By one Mr. Surface ——

Crabt. Ay, the younger.

Sir Oliver S. Hey! what the plague! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts: however, you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

Sir Benj. B. O, yes, we agree there.

Crabt. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

Sir Oliver S. Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation, he is the most imprudent man alive; for here he comes, walking as if nothing at all was the matter.

(*Enter* Sir Peter Teazle.)

Odds heart, Sir Peter, you are come in good time. I promise you; for we had just given you over.

Sir Benj. B. Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery!

Sir Oliver S. Why, man, what do you out of bed with a small sword through your body, and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

Sir Peter T. A small sword, and a bullet!

Sir Oliver S. Ay, these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor, to make me an accomplice.

Sir Peter T. Why, what is all this?

Sir Benj. B. We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.

Sir Peter T. [*aside*]. So, so; all over the town already.

Crabt. Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at your years.

Sir Peter T. Sir, what business is that of yours?

Mrs. Can. Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied.

Sir Peter T. Plague on your pity, ma'am! I desire none of it.

Sir Benj. B. However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

Sir Peter T. Sir, sir, I desire to be master in my own house.

Crabt. 'Tis no uncommon case, that's one comfort.

Sir Peter T. I insist on being left to myself; without ceremony. I insist on your leaving my house directly.

Mrs. Can. Well, well, we are going, and depend on't we'll make the best report of it we can. (*Exit.*)

Sir Peter T. Leave my house!

Crabt. And tell how hardly you've been treated.

(*Exit.*)

Sir Peter T. Leave my house!

Sir Benj. B. And how patiently you bear it.

(*Exit.*)

Sir Peter T. Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them!

Sir Oliver S. They are very provoking, indeed, Sir Peter.

(*Enter* Rowley.)

Rowley. I heard high words; what has ruffled you, sir?

Sir Peter T. Pshaw! what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

Rowley. Well, I'm not inquisitive.

Sir Oliver S. Well, Sir Peter, I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

Sir Peter T. A precious couple they are!

Rowley. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

Sir Oliver S. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

Rowley. Ay, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

Sir Oliver S. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Rowley. It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliver S. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age! But how's this, Sir Peter? you don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected.

Sir Peter T. Sir Oliver, we live in a

damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Rowley. What! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?

Sir Peter T. Pshaw! Plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!

Rowley. Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's so humbled, that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

Sir Peter T. And does Sir Oliver know all this?

Sir Oliver S. Every circumstance.

Sir Peter T. What, of the closet and the screen, hey?

Sir Oliver S. Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. O, I have been vastly diverted with the story! Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. 'Twas very pleasant.

Sir Oliver S. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. O, vastly diverting! Ha! ha! ha!

Rowley. To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments; ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, his sentiments! Ha! ha! ha! Hypocritical villain!

Sir Oliver S. Ay, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet: ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. Ha! ha! 'twas devilish entertaining, to be sure!

Sir Oliver S. Ha! ha! ha! Egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, my face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha! ha! Oh, I must never show my head again!

Sir Oliver S. But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you neither, my old friend; though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

Sir Peter T. O pray don't restrain your mirth on my account; it does not hurt me at all! I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. O yes, and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Mr. S—, Lady T—, and Sir P—, will be so entertaining!

Rowley. Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools; but I see Lady Teazle going towards the next room. I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

Sir Oliver S. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy.

Sir Peter T. Ah, I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart; though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries.

Rowley. We'll follow.

(*Exit* Sir Oliver.)

Sir Peter T. She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

Rowley. No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears.

Sir Peter T. Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?

Rowley. Oh, this is ungenerous in you!

Sir Peter T. Well, I know not what to think. You remember the letter I found of hers, evidently intended for Charles?

Rowley. A mere forgery, Sir Peter, laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction of.

Sir Peter T. I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has! Rowley, I'll go to her.

Rowley. Certainly.

Sir Peter T. Though when it is known that we are reconciled, people will laugh at me ten times more.

Rowley. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by showing them you are happy in spite of it.

Sir Peter T. I'faith, so I will! And if

I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

Rowley. Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion ——

Sir Peter T. Hold, Master Rowley! if you have any regard for me, let me never hear you utter anything like a sentiment. I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene III. *The Library* [*in* Joseph Surface's *House*].

(*Enter* Joseph Surface *and* Lady Sneerwell.)

Lady Sneer. Impossible! Will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles, and, of course, no longer oppose his union with Maria? The thought is distraction to me.

Joseph S. Can passion furnish a remedy?

Lady Sneer. No, nor cunning neither. O! I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer!

Joseph S. Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness.

Lady Sneer. Because the disappointment doesn't reach your heart; your interest only attached you to Maria. Had you felt for her what I have for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy could prevent your showing the sharpness of your vexation.

Joseph S. But why should your reproaches fall on me for this disappointment?

Lady Sneer. Are you not the cause of it? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in imposing upon Sir Peter, and supplanting your brother, but you must endeavour to seduce his wife? I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

Joseph S. Well, I admit I have been to blame. I confess I deviated from the direct road of wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

Lady Sneer. No!

Joseph S. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us.

Lady Sneer. I do believe so.

Joseph S. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove, that Charles is at this time contracted by vows and honor to your ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support?

Lady Sneer. This, indeed, might have assisted.

Joseph S. Come, come; it is not too late yet. (*Knocking at the door.*) But hark! this is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver; retire to that room, we'll consult farther when he is gone.

Lady Sneer. Well, but if *he* should find you out too?

Joseph S. Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake; and you may depend on it I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side!

Lady Sneer. I have no diffidence of your abilities! only be constant to one roguery at a time.

(*Exit* Lady Sneerwell.)

Joseph S. I will, I will. So! 'tis confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederate in evil. Well, at all events my character is so much better than Charles's, that I certainly — hey! — what! — this is not Sir Oliver, but old Stanley again. Plague on't that he should return to tease me just now. I shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here — and ——

(*Enter* Sir Oliver Surface.)

Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this time? You must not stay now, upon my word.

Sir Oliver S. Sir, I hear your uncle Oliver is expected here, and though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he'll do for me.

Joseph S. Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now, so I must beg — come any other time, and I promise you, you shall be assisted.

Sir Oliver S. No; Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Joseph S. Zounds, sir! then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

Sir Oliver S. Nay, sir ——

Joseph S. Sir, I insist on't: here, William! show this gentleman out. Since you compel me, sir, not one moment; this is such insolence! (*Going to push him out.*)

(*Enter* Charles Surface.)

Charles S. Hey day! what's the matter now! What the devil, have you got hold of my little broker here? Zounds, brother! don't hurt little Premium. What's the matter, my little fellow?

Joseph S. So! he has been with you too, has he?

Charles S. To be sure he has. Why he's as honest a little —— But sure, Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you?

Joseph S. Borrowing! no! But, brother, you know we expect Sir Oliver here every ——

Charles S. O Gad, that's true! Noll mustn't find the little broker here, to be sure.

Joseph S. Yet Mr. Stanley insists ——

Charles S. Stanley! why his name's Premium.

Joseph S. No, sir, Stanley.

Charles S. No, no, Premium.

Joseph S. Well, no matter which — but ——

Charles S. Ay, ay, Stanley or Premium, 'tis the same thing, as you say; for I suppose he goes by half a hundred names, besides A. B. at the coffee-house. (*Knocking.*)

Joseph S. 'Sdeath, here's Sir Oliver at the door. Now I beg, Mr. Stanley ——

Charles S. Ay, ay, and I beg, Mr. Premium ——

Sir Oliver S. Gentlemen ——

Joseph S. Sir, by heaven you shall go!

Charles S. Ay, out with him, certainly!

Sir Oliver S. This violence ——

Joseph S. Sir, 'tis your own fault.

Charles S. Out with him, to be sure. (*Both forcing* Sir Oliver *out.*)

(*Enter* Sir Peter *and* Lady Teazle, Maria, *and* Rowley.)

Sir Peter T. My old friend, Sir Oliver; hey! What in the name of wonder; here are dutiful nephews; assault their uncle at a first visit!

Lady T. Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we came in to rescue you.

Rowley. Truly, it was; for I perceive, Sir Oliver, the character of old Stanley was no protection to you.

Sir Oliver S. Nor of Premium either: the necessities of the former could not extort a shilling from that benevolent gentleman; and now, egad, I stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors, and being knocked down without being bid for.

Joseph S. Charles!

Charles S. Joseph!

Joseph S. 'Tis now complete!

Charles S. Very!

Sir Oliver S. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley too — look on that elder nephew of mine. You know what he has already received from my bounty; and you also know how gladly I would have regarded half my fortune as held in trust for him; judge then my disappointment in discovering him to be destitute of faith, charity, and gratitude.

Sir Peter T. Sir Oliver, I should be more surprised at this declaration, if I had not myself found him to be mean, treacherous, and hypocritical.

Lady T. And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him call *me* to his character.

Sir Peter T. Then, I believe, we need add no more: if he knows himself, he will consider it as the most perfect punishment, that he is known to the world.

Charles S. [*aside*]. If they talk this way to honesty, what will they say to me, by and by?

Sir Oliver S. As for that prodigal, his brother, there ——

Charles S. [*aside*]. Ay, now comes my turn; the damned family pictures will ruin me.

Joseph S. Sir Oliver; uncle, will you honor me with a hearing?

Charles S. [*aside*]. Now if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I might recollect myself a little.

Sir Peter T. [*to* Joseph]. I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself entirely.

Joseph S. I trust I could.

Sir Oliver S. Well, sir! and you could justify yourself too, I suppose?

Charles S. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver S. What! Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I suppose?

Charles S. True, sir; but they were *family* secrets, and should not be mentioned again, you know.

Rowley. Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles's follies with anger.

Sir Oliver S. Odd's heart, no more can I; nor with gravity either. Sir Peter, do you know the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors; sold me judges and generals by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

Charles S. To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me sincere when I tell you — and upon my soul I would not say so if I was not — that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

Sir Oliver S. Charles, I believe you; give me your hand again; the ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

Charles S. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

Lady T. Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to.

Sir Oliver S. Oh, I have heard of his attachment there; and, with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right — that blush ——

Sir Peter T. Well, child, speak your sentiments!

Maria. Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy; for me — whatever claim I had to his affection, I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

Charles S. How, Maria!

Sir Peter T. Hey day! what's the mystery now? While he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform, I'll warrant you won't have him.

Maria. His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

Charles S. Lady Sneerwell!

Joseph S. Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard to justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed. (*Opens the door.*)

(*Enter* Lady Sneerwell.)

Sir Peter T. So! another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room of the house, I suppose.

Lady Sneer. Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

Charles S. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? For, as I have life, I don't understand it.

Joseph S. I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

Sir Peter T. And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake. Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

Rowley. Walk in, Mr. Snake.

(*Enter* Snake.)

I thought his testimony might be wanted; however, it happens unluckily that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, not to support her.

Lady Sneer. A villain! Treacherous to me at last! Speak, fellow; have you too conspired against me?

Snake. I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons; you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question; but I unfortunately have been offered double to speak the truth.

Sir Peter T. Plot and counter-plot, egad!

Lady Sneer. The torments of shame and disappointment on you all.

Lady T. Hold, Lady Sneerwell; before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken, in writing letters from me to Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform them that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they gave her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

Lady Sneer. You too, madam — provoking — insolent. May your husband live these fifty years. (*Exit.*)

Sir Peter T. Oons! what a fury!

Lady T. A malicious creature, indeed!

Sir Peter T. Hey! Not for her last wish?

Lady T. O no!

Sir Oliver S. Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

Joseph S. Sir, I am so confounded, to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say; however, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. (*Exit.*)

Sir Peter T. Moral to the last drop!

Sir Oliver S. Ay, and marry her, Joseph, if you can. Oil and vinegar, egad! you'll do very well together.

Rowley. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present?

Snake. Before I go, I beg pardon once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

Sir Peter T. Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

Snake. But I must request of the company that it shall never be known.

Sir Peter T. Hey! What the plague! Are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life?

Snake. Ah, sir! consider; I live by the badness of my character. I have nothing but my infamy to depend on! and if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

Sir Oliver S. Well, well; we'll not traduce you by saying anything in your praise, never fear. (*Exit* Snake.)

Sir Peter T. There's a precious rogue!

Lady T. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oliver S. Ay, ay, that's as it should be, and egad we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Charles S. Thank you, dear uncle!

Sir Peter T. What, you rogue! don't you ask the girl's consent first?

Charles S. Oh, I have done that a long time — a minute ago — and she has looked yes.

Maria. For shame, Charles! I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word.

Sir Oliver S. Well, then, the fewer the better. May your love for each other never know abatement!

Sir Peter T. And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I intend to do!

Charles S. Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me; and I suspect that I owe you much.

Sir Oliver S. You do indeed, Charles.

Rowley. If my efforts to serve you had not succeeded, you would have been in my debt for the attempt: but deserve to be happy, and you overpay me.

Sir Peter T. Ay, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Charles S. Why, as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it; but here shall be my monitor — my gentle guide. Ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, shouldst wave
thy beauty's sway,
Thou still must rule, because I will obey:
An humble fugitive from Folly view,
No sanctuary near but Love and you.

(*To the audience.*)

You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even Scandal dies if you approve.

EPILOGUE

By Mr. Colman

Spoken by Lady Teazle

I, who was late so volatile and gay,
Like a trade wind must now blow all one way,
Bend all my cares, my studies, and my vows,
To one dull rusty weathercock — my spouse!
So wills our virtuous bard — the motley Bayes
Of crying epilogues and laughing plays!
Old bachelors, who marry smart young wives,
Learn from our play to regulate your lives:
Each bring his dear to town, all faults upon her,
London will prove the very source of honor.
Plunged fairly in, like a cold bath it serves,
When principles relax, to brace the nerves.
Such is my case; and yet I must deplore
That the gay dream of dissipation's o'er.
And say, ye fair, was ever lively wife,
Born with a genius for the highest life,
Like me untimely blasted in her bloom,
Like me condemn'd to such a dismal doom?
Save money — when I just knew how to waste it!
Leave London — just as I began to taste it!
Must I then watch the early crowing cock,
The melancholy ticking of a clock;
In a lone rustic hall for ever pounded,
With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats surrounded?
With humble curate can I now retire
(While good Sir Peter boozes with the squire),
And at backgammon mortify my soul,
That pants for loo, or flutters at a vole?
Seven's the main! Dear sound that must expire,
Lost at hot cockles round a Christmas fire!
The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,
Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content!
Farewell the plumèd head, the cushioned tête,
That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
The spirit-stirring drum! card drums I mean,
Spadille — odd trick — pam — 'basto — king and queen!
And you, ye knockers, that, with brazen throat,
The welcome visitors' approach denote;
Farewell all quality of high renown,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious town!
Farewell! your revels I partake no more,
And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!

All this I told our bard; he smiled, and said 'twas clear,
I ought to play deep tragedy next year;
Meanwhile he drew wise morals from his play,
And in these solemn periods stalk'd away: —
"Blest were the fair like you! her faults who stopp'd,
And closed her follies when the curtain dropp'd!
No more in vice or error to engage,
Or play the fool at large on life's great stage."

RICHELIEU

OR

THE CONSPIRACY

By SIR EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

(1839)

TO THE

MARQUIS OF LANDSDOWNE, K.G., &c., &c.

THIS DRAMA IS INSCRIBED IN TRIBUTE TO THE TALENTS WHICH COMMAND
AND THE QUALITIES WHICH ENDEAR RESPECT

LONDON, *March* 5, 1839

PREFACE TO RICHELIEU

THE administration of Cardinal Richelieu, whom (despite all his darker qualities) Voltaire and History justly consider the true architect of the French monarchy, and the great parent of French civilization, is characterized by features alike tragic and comic. A weak king — an ambitious favorite; a despicable conspiracy against the minister, nearly always associated with a dangerous treason against the State — these, with little variety of names and dates, constitute the eventful cycle through which, with a dazzling ease and an arrogant confidence, the great luminary fulfilled its destinies. Blent together, in startling contrast, we see the grandest achievements and the pettiest agents; — the spy — the mistress — the capuchin; — the destruction of feudalism; — the humiliation of Austria; — the dismemberment of Spain.

Richelieu himself is still what he was in his own day — a man of two characters. If, on the one hand, he is justly represented as inflexible and vindictive, crafty and unscrupulous; so, on the other, it cannot be denied that he was placed in times in which the long impunity of every license required stern examples — that he was beset by perils and intrigues, which gave a certain excuse to the subtlest inventions of self-defence — that his ambition was inseparably connected with a passionate love for the glory of his country — and that, if he was her dictator, he was not less her benefactor. It has been fairly remarked by the most impartial historians, that he was no less generous to merit than severe to crime — that, in the various departments of the State, the Army, and the Church, he selected and distinguished the ablest aspirants — that the wars which he conducted were, for the most part, essential to the preservation of France, and Europe itself, from the formidable encroachments of the Austrian House — that, in spite of those wars, the people were not oppressed with exorbitant imposts — and that he left the kingdom he had governed in a more flourishing and vigorous state than at any former period of the French history, or at the decease of Louis XIV.

The cabals formed against this great statesman were not carried on by the patriotism of public virtue, or the emulation of equal talent: they were but Court struggles, in which the most worthless agents had recourse to the most desperate means. In each, as I have before observed, we see combined the twofold attempt to murder the minister and to betray the country. Such, then, are the agents, and such the designs, with which truth, in the Drama as in History, requires us to contrast the celebrated Cardinal; — not disguising his foibles or his vices, but not unjust to the grander qualities (especially the love of country), by which they were often dignified, and, at times, redeemed.

The historical drama is the concentration of historical events. In the attempt to place upon the stage the picture of an era, that license with dates and details, which Poetry permits, and which the highest authorities in the Drama of France herself have sanctioned, has been, though not unsparingly, indulged. The conspiracy of the Duc de Bouillon is, for instance, amalgamated with the dénouement of "The Day of Dupes"; and circumstances connected with the treason of Cinq Mars (whose brilliant youth and gloomy catastrophe tend to subvert poetic and historic justice by seducing us to forget his base ingratitude and his perfidious apostasy) are identified with the fate of the earlier favorite Baradas, whose sudden rise and as sudden fall passed into a proverb. I ought to add, that the noble romance of Cinq Mars suggested one of the scenes in the fifth act; and that for the conception of some portion of the intrigue connected with De Mauprat and Julie, I am, with great alterations of incident, and considerable if not entire reconstruction of character, indebted to an early and admirable novel by the author of "Picciola."

London, *March*, 1839.

NOTE

The length of the Play necessarily requires curtailments on the Stage — the passages thus omitted are those inserted with inverted commas. Many of the passages thus left out, however immaterial to the audience, must obviously be such as the reader would be least inclined to dispense with — namely, those which, without being absolutely essential to the business of the Stage, contain either the subtler strokes of character, or the more poetical embellishments of description. A more important consequence of these suppressions is, that Richelieu himself is left too often and too unrelievedly to positions which place him in an *amiable* light, without that shadowing forth of his more sinister motives and his fiercer qualities which is attempted in the written play. Thus, the *character* takes a degree of credit due only to the *situation.* To judge the Author's conception of *Richelieu* fairly, and to estimate how far it is consistent with historical portraiture, the play must be *read.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Louis the Thirteenth.
Gaston, Duke of Orleans, brother to Louis XIII.
Baradas, favorite of the King, First Gentleman of the Chamber, Premier Ecuyer, etc.
Cardinal Richelieu.
The Chevalier de Mauprat.
The Sieur de Beringhen, in attendance on the King,[1] one of the conspirators.
Joseph, a Capuchin, Richelieu's confidant.
Huguet, an officer of Richelieu's household guard — a spy.
François, first page to Richelieu.
First Courtier.
Captain of the Archers.
Clermont.
First, Second, Third Secretaries of State.
Governor of the Bastile.
Gaoler.
Courtiers, Pages, Conspirators, Officers, Soldiers, etc.
Julie de Mortemar, an orphan, ward to Richelieu.
Marion de Lorme, Mistress to Orleans, but in Richelieu's pay.

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[1] Properly speaking, the King's First Valet de Chambre, a post of great importance at that time.

RICHELIEU

ACT I

First Day

Scene I. — *A room in the house of* Marion de Lorme; *a table towards the front of the stage (with wine, fruits, etc.), at which are seated* Baradas, *four* Courtiers, *splendidly dressed in the costume of* 1641–42; *the* Duke of Orleans *reclining on a large fauteuil;* Marion de Lorme, *standing at the back of his chair, offers him a goblet, and then retires. At another table,* De Beringhen, De Mauprat, *playing at dice; other* Courtiers, *of inferior rank to those at the table of the* Duke, *looking on.*

Orleans (*drinking*). Here's to our enterprise! —
Baradas (*glancing at* Marion). Hush, Sir! —
Orleans (*aside*). Nay, Count,
You may trust her; she doats on me; no house
So safe as Marion's. "At our statelier homes
"The very walls do play the eavesdropper.
"There's not a sunbeam creeping o'er our floors
"But seems a glance from that malignant eye
"Which reigns o'er France; our fatal greatness lives
"In the sharp glare of one relentless day.
"But Richelieu's self forgets to fear the sword
"The mirtle hides; and Marion's silken robe
"Casts its kind charity o'er fiercer sins
"Than those which haunt the rosy path between
"The lip and eye of beauty. Oh, no house
"So safe as Marion's."
Baradas. Still, we have a secret,
And oil and water — woman and a secret —
Are hostile properties.
Orleans. Well — Marion, see
How the play prospers yonder.
(Marion *goes to the next table, looks on for a few moments, then Exit.*)
Baradas (*producing a parchment*). I have now
All the conditions drawn; it only needs
Our signatures: upon receipt of this,
(Whereto is joined the schedule of our treaty
With the Count-Duke, the Richelieu of the Escurial,)
Bouillon will join his army with the Spaniard,
March on to Paris, — there, dethrone the King:
You will be Regent; I, and ye, my Lords,
Form the new Council. So much for the core
Of our great scheme.
Orleans. But Richelieu is an Argus:
One of his hundred eyes will light upon us,
And then — good-bye to life.
Baradas. To gain the prize
We must destroy the Argus: — ay, my Lords,
The scroll the core, but blood must fill the veins
Of our design; — while this despatched to Bouillon,
Richelieu despatched to Heaven! — The last *my* charge.
Meet here to-morrow night. *You*, Sir, as first
In honor and in hope, meanwhile select
Some trusty knave to bear the scroll to Bouillon;
Midst Richelieu's foes *I'll* find some desperate hand
To strike for vengeance, while we stride to power.

ORLEANS. So be it; — to-morrow, midnight. Come, my Lords.
(*Exeunt* ORLEANS, *and the* COURTIERS *in his train. Those at the other table rise, salute* ORLEANS, *and re-seat themselves.*)
DE BERINGHEN. Double the stakes.
DE MAUPRAT. Done.
DE BERINGHEN. Bravo; faith it shames me
To bleed a purse already *in extremis.*
DE MAUPRAT. Nay, as you've had the patient to yourself
So long, no other doctor should despatch it.
(DE MAUPRAT *throws and loses.*)
OMNES. Lost! Ha, ha, — poor De Mauprat!
DE BERINGHEN. One throw more?
DE MAUPRAT. No; I am bankrupt (*pushing gold*) there goes all — except
My honor and my sword. (*They rise.*)
DE BERINGHEN. Long cloaks and honor
Went out of vogue together, when we found
We got on much more rapidly without them;
The sword, indeed, is never out of fashion, —
The Devil has care of *that.*
FIRST GAMESTER. Ay, take the sword
To Cardinal Richelieu: — he gives gold for steel,
When worn by brave men.
DE MAUPRAT. Richelieu!
DE BERINGHEN (*to* BARADAS). At that name
He changes color, bites his nether lip.
Ev'n in his brightest moments whisper "Richelieu,"
And you cloud all his sunshine.
BARADAS. I have mark'd it,
And I will learn the wherefore.
DE MAUPRAT. The Egyptian
Dissolved her richest jewel in a draught:
Would I could so melt time and all its treasures,
And drain it thus. (*Drinking.*)
DE BERINGHEN. Come, gentlemen, what say ye,
A walk on the Parade?
OMNES. Ay, come, De Mauprat.
DE MAUPRAT. Pardon me; we shall meet again, ere nightfall.
BARADAS. I'll stay and comfort Mauprat.
DE BERINGHEN. Comfort! — when
We gallant fellows have run out a friend
There's nothing left — except to run him through!
There's the last act of friendship.
DE MAUPRAT. Let me keep
That favor in reserve; in all beside
Your most obedient servant.
(*Exeunt* DE BERINGHEN, *etc., Manent* DE MAUPRAT *and* BARADAS.)
BARADAS. You have lost —
Yet are not sad.
DE MAUPRAT. Sad! — Life and gold have wings
And must fly one day: — open, then, their cages
And wish them merry.
BARADAS. You're a strange enigma: —
Fiery in war — and yet to glory lukewarm;
All mirth in action — in repose all gloom —
These are extremes in which the unconscious heart
Betrays the fever of deep-fix'd disease.
Confide in me! our young days roll'd together
In the same river, glassing the same stars
That smile i' the heaven of hope; — alike we made
Bright-winged steeds of our unform'd chimeras,
Spurring the fancies upward to the air,
Wherein we shaped fair castles from the cloud,
Fortune of late has sever'd us, and led
Me to the rank of Courtier, Count, and Favourite —
You to the titles of the wildest gallant
And bravest knight in France; — are you content?
No; — trust in me — some gloomy secret —
DE MAUPRAT. Ay: —
A secret that doth haunt me, as, of old,

Men were possess'd of fiends? Where'er I turn,
The grave yawns dark before me! I *will* trust you —
Hating the Cardinal, and beguiled by Orleans,
You know I join'd the Languedoc revolt —
Was captured — sent to the Bastile —
Baradas. But shared
The general pardon, which the Duke of Orleans
Won for himself and all in the revolt,
Who but obey'd his orders.
De Mauprat. Note the phrase; —
"*Obey'd his orders.*" Well, when on my way
To join the Duke in Languedoc, I (then
The down upon my lip — less man than boy)
Leading young valors — reckless as myself,
Seized on the town of Faviaux, and displaced
The Royal banners for the Rebel. Orleans,
(Never too daring) when I reach'd the camp,
Blamed me for acting — mark — *without his orders:*
Upon this quibble Richelieu razed my name
Out of the general pardon.
Baradas. Yet released you
From the Bastile —
De Mauprat. To call me to his presence,
And thus address me: "You have seized a town
Of France, without the orders of your leader,
And for this treason, but one sentence — Death."
Baradas. Death!
De Mauprat. "I have pity on your youth and birth,
Nor wish to glut the headsman; — join your troop,
Now on the march against the Spaniards; — change
The traitor's scaffold for the Soldier's grave; —
Your memory stainless — they who shared your crime
Exil'd or dead, — your king shall never learn it."
Baradas. O tender pity! — O most charming prospect!
Blown into atoms by a bomb, or drill'd
Into a cullender by gunshot! — Well? —
De Mauprat. You have heard if I fought bravely. — Death became
Desired as Daphne by the eager Day-god.
Like him I chas'd the nymph — to grasp the laurel!
I could not die!
Baradas. Poor Fellow!
De Mauprat. When the Cardinal
Review'd the troops — his eye met mine; — he frown'd,
Summon'd me forth — "How's this?" quoth he; "you have shunn'd
The sword — beware the axe! — 'twill fall one day!"
He left me thus — we were recalled to Paris,
And — you know all!
Baradas. And, knowing this, why halt you,
Spell'd by the rattlesnake, — while in the breasts
Of your firm friends beat hearts, that vow the death
Of your grim tyrant? — wake! — Be one of us;
The time invites — the King detests the Cardinal,
Dares not disgrace, — but groans to be deliver'd
Of that too great a subject — join your friends,
Free France and save yourself.
De Mauprat. Hush! Richelieu bears
A charmed life; — to all who have braved his power,
One common end — the block.
Baradas. Nay, if he live,
The block your doom!
De Mauprat. Better the victim, Count,
Than the assassin — France requires a Richelieu,
But does not need a Mauprat. Truce to this; —

All time one midnight, where my thoughts are spectres.
What to me fame? — What love? —
Baradas. Yet dost thou love *not?*
De Mauprat. Love? — I am young —
Baradas. And Julie fair! (*Aside.*) It is so,
Upon the margin of the grave — his hand
Would pluck the rose that I would win and wear!
(*Aloud*). "Thou lovest —
"De Mauprat. Who, lonely in the midnight tent,
"Gazed on the watch-fires in the sleepless air,
"Nor chose one star amidst the clustering hosts
"To bless it in the name of some fair face
"Set in his spirit, as the star in Heaven?
"For our divine Affections, like the Spheres,
"Move ever, ever musical.
"Baradas. You speak
"As one who fed on poetry.
"De Mauprat. Why, man,
"The thoughts of lovers stir with poetry
"As leaves with summer wind. — The heart that loves
"Dwells in an Eden, hearing angel lutes,
"As Eve in the First Garden. Hadst thou seen
"My Julie, and not felt it henceforth dull
"To live in the common world — and talk in words
"That clothe the feelings of the frigid herd? —
"Upon the perfumed pillow of her lips —
"As on his native bed of roses flush'd
"With Paphian skies — Love smiling sleeps: — Her voice
"The blest interpreter of thoughts as pure
"As virgin wells where Dian takes delight,
"Or Fairies dip their changelings! — In the maze
"Of her harmonious beauties — Modestly
"(Like some severer Grace that leads the choir
"Of her sweet sisters) every airy motion
"Attunes to such chaste charm, that Passion holds
"His burning breath, and will not with a sigh
"Dissolve the spell that binds him! — Oh those eyes
"That woo the earth — shadowing more soul than lurks
"Under the lids of Psyche! — Go! — thy lip
"Curls at the purfled phrases of a lover —
"Love thou, and if thy love be deep as mine,
"Thou wilt not laugh at poets.
"Baradas (*aside*). With each word
"Thou wak'st a jealous demon in my heart,
"And my hand clutches at my hilt —"
De Mauprat (*gaily*). No more! —
I love! — Your breast holds both my secrets; — Never
Unbury either! — Come, while yet we may,
We'll bask us in the noon of rosy life: —
Lounge through the gardens, — flaunt it in the taverns, —
Laugh, — game, — drink, — feast; — If so confine my days,
Faith, I'll enclose the nights. — Pshaw! not so grave;
I'm a true Frenchman! — *Vive la bagatelle!*
(*As they are going out enter* Huguet *and four arquebusiers.*)
Huguet. Messire De Mauprat, — I arrest you! — Follow
To the Lord Cardinal.
De Mauprat. You see, my friend,
I'm out of my suspense — The tiger's play'd
Long enough with his prey. — Farewell! — Hereafter
Say, when men name me, "Adrien de Mauprat
Lived without hope, and perished without fear!"
(*Exeunt* De Mauprat, Huguet, *etc.*)
Baradas. Farewell! — I trust forever! I design'd thee
For Richelieu's murderer — but, as well his martyr!
In childhood you the stronger — and I cursed you;
In youth the fairer — and I cursed you still;
And now my rival! While the name of Julie

Hung on thy lips — I smiled — for then I saw
In my mind's eye, the cold and grinning Death
Hang o'er thy head the pall! — Ambition, Love,
Ye twin-born stars of daring destinies,
Sit in my house of Life! — By the King's aid
I will be Julie's husband — in despite
Of my Lord Cardinal — By the King's aid
I will be minister of France — spite
Of my Lord Cardinal; — and then — what then?
The King loves Julie — feeble prince — false master —
(*Producing and gazing on the parchment.*)
Then, by the aid of Bouillon and the Spaniard,
I will dethrone the King; and all — ha! — ha! —
All, in despite of my Lord Cardinal.
(*Exit.*)

Scene II. — *A room in the Palais Cardinal, the walls hung with arras. A large screen in one corner. A table covered with books, papers, etc. A rude clock in a recess. Busts, statues, bookcases, weapons of different periods, and banners suspended over* Richelieu's *chair.*

(Richelieu *and* Joseph.)

Richelieu. And so you think this new conspiracy
The craftiest trap yet laid for the old fox? —
Fox! — Well, I like the nickname! What did Plutarch
Say of the Greek Lysander?
Joseph. I forget.
Richelieu. That where the lion's skin fell short, he eked it
Out with the fox's. A great statesman, Joseph,
That same Lysander!
Joseph. Orleans heads the traitors.
Richelieu. A very wooden head then! Well?
Joseph. The favorite,
Count Baradas —
Richelieu. A weed of hasty growth,
First gentleman of the chamber, — titles, lands,
And the King's ear! — it cost me six long winters
To mount as high, as in six little moons
This painted lizard — But I hold the ladder,
And when I shake — he falls! What more?
Joseph. A scheme
To make your orphan-ward an instrument
To aid your foes. You placed her with the Queen,
One of the royal chamber, — as a watch
I' th' enemy's quarters —
Richelieu. And the silly child
Visits me daily, — calls me "Father." — prays
Kind heaven to bless me — And for all the rest,
As well have placed a doll about the Queen!
She does not heed who frowns — who smiles; with whom
The King confers in whispers; notes not when
Men who last week were foes, are found in corners
Mysteriously affectionate; words spoken
Within closed doors she never hears; — by chance
Taking the air at keyholes — Senseless puppet!
No ears — nor eyes! — and yet she says — "She loves me!"
Go on —
Joseph. Your ward has charm'd the King.
Richelieu. Out on you!
Have I not, one by one, from such fair shoots
Pluck'd the insidious ivy of his love?
And shall it creep around my blossoming tree
Where innocent thoughts, like happy birds, make music
That spirits in Heaven might hear? They're sinful too,
Those passionate surfeits of the rampant flesh,
The Church condemns them; and to us, my Joseph,

The props and pillars of the Church, most hurtful.
The King is weak — whoever the King loves
Must rule the King; the lady loves another,
The other rules the lady — thus we're balked
Of our own proper sway — The King must have
No Goddess but the State: — the State — That's Richelieu!
Joseph. This not the worst; — Louis, in all decorous,
And deeming you her least compliant guardian,
Would veil his suit by marriage with his minion,
Your prosperous foe, Count Baradas.
Richelieu. Ha! ha!
I have another bride for Baradas!
Joseph. You, my lord?
Richelieu. Ay — more faithful than the love
Of fickle woman: — when the head lies lowliest,
Clasping him fondest; — Sorrow never knew
So sure a soother, — and her bed is stainless!
Joseph (*aside*). If of the grave he speaks I do not wonder
That priests are bachelors!

(*Enter* François.)

François. Mademoiselle De Mortemar.
Richelieu. Most opportune — admit her. (*Exit* François.)
In my closet
You'll find a rosary, Joseph; ere you tell
Three hundred beads, I'll summon you. — Stay, Joseph;
I did omit an Ave in my matins, —
A grievous fault; — atone it for me, Joseph;
There is a scourge within; I am weak, you strong,
It were but charity to take my sin
On such broad shoulders. Exercise is healthful.
Joseph. I! guilty of such criminal presumption
As to mistake myself for you. — No, never!
Think it not. — (*Aside.*) Troth, a pleasant invitation! (*Exit* Joseph.)

(*Enter* Julie de Mortemar.)

Richelieu. That's my sweet Julie! why, upon this face
Blushes such daybreak, one might swear the Morning
Were come to visit Tithon.
Julie (*placing herself at his feet*). Are you gracious?
May I say "Father?"
Richelieu. Now and ever!
Julie. Father!
A sweet word to an orphan.
Richelieu. No; not orphan
While Richelieu lives; thy father loved me well;
My friend, ere I had flatterers (now, I'm great,
In other phrase, I'm friendless) — he died young
In years, not service, and bequeathed thee to me;
And thou shalt have a dowry, girl, to buy
Thy mate amidst the mightiest. Drooping? — sighs? —
Art thou not happy at the Court?
Julie. Not often.
Richelieu (*aside*). Can she love Baradas? — Ah! at thy heart
There's what can smile and sigh, blush and grow pale,
All in a breath! — Thou art admired — art young;
Does not his Majesty commend thy beauty —
Ask thee to sing to him? and swear such sounds
Had smooth'd the brows of Saul? —
Julie. He's very tiresome,
Our worthy King.
Richelieu. Fie; kings are never tiresome,
Save to their ministers. — What courtly gallants
Charm ladies most? De Sourdiac, Longueville, or
The favorite Baradas?
Julie. A smileless man —
I fear, and shun him.

RICHELIEU. Yet he courts thee?
JULIE. Then
He is more tiresome than his Majesty.
RICHELIEU. Right, girl, shun Baradas. — Yet of these flowers
Of France, not one, in whose more honied breath
Thy heart hears Summer whisper?

(*Enter* HUGUET.)

HUGUET. The Chevalier
De Mauprat waits below.
JULIE (*starting up*). De Mauprat!
RICHELIEU. Hem!
He has been tiresome, too. — Anon.
(*Exit* HUGUET.)
JULIE. What doth he? —
I mean — I — Does your Eminence — that is —
Know you Messire de Mauprat?
RICHELIEU. Well! — and you —
Has he address'd you often?
JULIE. Often! No, —
Nine times; — nay, ten! — the last time, by the lattice
Of the great staircase. (*In a melancholy tone.*) The Court sees him rarely.
RICHELIEU. A bold and forward royster?
JULIE. *He?* — nay, modest,
Gentle, and sad methinks.
RICHELIEU. Wears gold and azure?
JULIE. No; sable.
RICHELIEU. So you note his colors, Julie?
Shame on you, child, look loftier. By the mass
I have business with this modest gentleman.
JULIE. You're angry with poor Julie. There's no cause.
RICHELIEU. No cause — you hate my foes?
JULIE. I do!
RICHELIEU. Hate Mauprat!
JULIE. Not Mauprat. No, not Adrien, father?
RICHELIEU. Adrien!
Familiar! — Go, child; no, — not *that* way; — wait
In the tapestry chamber; I will join you — go.
JULIE. His brows are knit; — I dare not call him father!
But I *must* speak — Your Eminence —
RICHELIEU (*sternly*). Well! girl!
JULIE. Nay
Smile on me — one smile more; there, now I'm happy.
Do not rank De Mauprat with your foes; he is not,
I know he is not, he loves France too well.
RICHELIEU. Not rank De Mauprat with my foes? So be it.
I'll blot him from that list.
JULIE. That's my own father.
(*Exit* JULIE.)
RICHELIEU (*ringing a small bell on the table*). Huguet!

(*Enter* HUGUET.)

De Mauprat struggled not, nor murmur'd?
HUGUET. No; proud and passive.
RICHELIEU. Bid him enter. — Hold:
Look that he hide no weapon. Humph, despair
Makes victims sometimes victors. When he has enter'd,
Glide round unseen; — place thyself yonder (*pointing to the screen*); watch him;
If he show violence — (let me see thy carbine;
So, a good weapon) — if he play the lion,
Why — the dog's death.
HUGUET. I never miss my mark.
(*Exit* HUGUET; RICHELIEU *seats himself at the table, and slowly arranges the papers before him. Enter* DE MAUPRAT, *preceded by* HUGUET, *who then retires behind the screen.*)
RICHELIEU. Approach, Sir. — Can you call to mind the hour,
Now three years since, when in this room, methinks,
Your presence honor'd me?
DE MAUPRAT. It is, my Lord,
One of my most —
RICHELIEU (*drily*). Delightful recollections.
DE MAUPRAT (*aside*). St. Denis! doth he make a jest of axe
And headsman?

Richelieu (*sternly*). I did then accord you
A mercy ill requited — you still live?
"De Mauprat. To meet death face to face at last.
"Richelieu. Your words
"Are bold.
"De Mauprat. My deeds have not belied them.
"Richelieu. Deeds!
"O miserable delusion of man's pride!
"Deeds! cities sack'd, fields ravaged, hearths profaned,
"Men butcher'd! In your hour of doom behold
"The *deeds* you boast of! From rank showers of blood,
"And the red light of blazing roofs, you build
"The Rainbow Glory, and to shuddering Conscience
"Cry, — Lo, the Bridge to Heaven?
"De Mauprat. If war be sinful,
"Your hand the gauntlet cast.
"Richelieu. It was so, Sir.
"Note the distinction: — I weigh'd well the cause
"Which made the standard holy; raised the war
"But to secure the peace. France bled — I groan'd;
"But look'd beyond; and, in the vista, saw
"France saved, and I exulted. You — but you
"Were but the tool of slaughter — knowing nought,
"Foreseeing nought, nought hoping, nought lamenting,
"And for nought fit, — save cutting throats for hire.
"Deeds, marry, deeds!
"De Mauprat. If you would deign to speak
"Thus to your armies ere they march to battle,
"Perchance your Eminence might have the pain
"Of the throat-cutting to yourself.
"Richelieu (*aside*). He has wit,
"This Mauprat — (*Aloud.*) Let it pass; there is against you
"What you can less excuse." Messire de Mauprat
Doom'd to sure death, how hast thou since consumed
The time allotted thee for serious thought
And solemn penitence?
De Mauprat (*embarrassed*). The time, my Lord?
Richelieu. Is not the question plain? I'll answer for thee:
Thou hast sought nor priest nor shrine; no sackcloth chafed
Thy delicate flesh. The rosary and the death's-head
Have not, with pious meditation, purged
Earth from the carnal gaze. What thou hast *not* done
Brief told; what done, a volume! Wild debauch,
Turbulent riot: — for the morn the dice-box —
Noon claim'd the duel — and the night the wassail:
These, your most holy, pure preparatives
For death and judgment. Do I wrong you, Sir?
De Mauprat. I was not always thus: — if chang'd my nature
Blame that which changed my fate. — Alas, my Lord,
"There is a brotherhood which calm-eyed Reason,
"Can wot not of betwixt Despair and Mirth.
"My birth-place mid the vines of sunny Provence,
"Perchance the stream that sparkles in my veins,
"Came from that wine of passionate life which, erst,
"Glow'd in the wild heart of the Troubadour:
"And danger, which makes steadier courage wary,
"But fevers me with an insane delight;
"As one of old who on the mountain-crags
"Caught madness from a Mænad's haunting eyes.
"Were you, my Lord, — whose path imperial power,
"And the grave cares of reverent wisdom guard

"From all that tempts to folly meaner men, —"
Were you accursed with that which you inflicted
By bed and board, dogg'd by one ghastly spectre —
The while within you youth beat high, and life
Grew lovelier from the neighboring frown of death —
The heart no bud, nor fruit — save in those seeds
Most worthless, which spring up, bloom, bear, and wither
In the same hour — Were this your fate, perchance
You would have err'd like me!
Richelieu. I might, like you,
Have been a brawler and a reveller; — not,
Like you trickster and a thief. —
De Mauprat (*advancing threateningly*). Lord Cardinal! —
Unsay those words!
(Huguet *deliberately raises his carbine.*)
Richelieu (*waving his hand*). Not quite so quick, friend Huguet;
Messire de Mauprat is a patient man,
And he can wait! —
You have outrun your fortune; —
I blame you not, that you would be a beggar —
Each to his taste! — But I do charge you, Sir,
That, being beggar'd, you would coin false monies
Out of that crucible, called Debt. — To live
On means not yours — be brave in silks and laces,
Gallant in steeds — splendid in banquets; — all
Not *yours* — ungiven — unherited — unpaid for; —
This is to be a trickster; and to filch
Men's art and labor, which to them is wealth,
Life, daily bread — quitting all scores with — "Friend,
You're troublesome!" — Why this, forgive me,
Is what — when done with a less dainty grace —
Plain folks call "*Theft!*" You owe eight thousand pistoles,
Minus one crown, two liards! —
De Mauprat (*aside*). The old conjuror! —
'Sdeath, he'll inform me next how many cups
I drank at dinner! —
Richelieu. This is scandalous,
Shaming your birth and blood. — I tell you, Sir,
That you must pay your debts. —
De Mauprat. With all my heart,
My Lord. — Where shall I borrow, then, the money?
Richelieu (*aside and laughing*). A humorous dare-devil! — The very man
To suit my purpose — ready, frank, and bold!
(*Rising and earnestly.*)
Adrien de Mauprat, men have called me cruel; —
I am not; — I am *just!* — I found France rent asunder, —
The rich men despots, and the poor banditti; —
Sloth in the mart, and schism within the temple;
Brawls festering to Rebellion; and weak Laws
Rotting away with rust in antique sheaths. —
I have re-created France; and, from the ashes
Of the old feudal and decrepit carcase,
Civilization on her luminous wings
Soars, phœnix-like, to Jove! What was my art?
Genius, some say — some, Fortune, — Witchcraft, some.
Not so; — my art was Justice! Force and Fraud
Misname it cruelty — you shall confute them!
My champion You! You met me as your foe,
Depart my friend. — You shall not die. — France needs you.
You shall wipe off all stains — be rich, be honor'd,

Be great —
(De Mauprat *falls on his knee,* Richelieu *raises him.*)
I ask, Sir, in return, this hand,
To gift it with a bride, whose dower shall match,
Yet not exceed, her beauty.
De Mauprat (*hesitating*). I, my Lord,
I have no wish to marry.
Richelieu. Surely, Sir,
To die were worse.
De Mauprat. Scarcely; the poorest coward
Must die, — but knowingly to march to marriage —
My Lord, it asks the courage of a lion!
Richelieu. Traitor, thou triflest with me! — I know *all!*
Thou hast dared to love my ward — my charge.
De Mauprat. As rivers
May love the sunlight — basking in the beams,
And hurrying on! —
Richelieu. Thou hast told her of thy love?
De Mauprat. My Lord, if I had dared to love a maid,
Lowliest in France, I would not so have wrong'd her
As bid her link rich life and virgin hope
With one, the deathman's gripe might, from her side
Pluck at the nuptial altar.
Richelieu. I believe thee;
Yet since she knows not of thy love, renounce her;
Take life and fortune with another! — Silent?
De Mauprat. Your fate has been one triumph. — You know not
How bless'd a thing it was in my dark hour
To nurse the one sweet thought you bid me banish.
Love hath no need of words; — nor less within
That holiest temple — the heaven-builded soul —
Breathes the recorded vow — Base knight, — false lover
Were he, who barter'd all, that brighten'd grief
Or sanctified despair, for life and gold.
Revoke your mercy; — I prefer the fate
I look'd for!
Richelieu. Huguet! To the tapestry chamber
Conduct your prisoner.
(*To* Mauprat.) You will there behold
The executioner: — your doom be private —
And Heaven have mercy on you!
De Mauprat. When I'm dead,
Tell her, I loved her.
Richelieu. Keep such follies, Sir,
For fitter ears; — go —
De Mauprat. Does he mock me?
(*Exeunt* De Mauprat *and* Huguet.)
Richelieu. Joseph,
Come forth.

(*Enter* Joseph.)

Methinks your cheek hath lost its rubies;
I fear you have been too lavish of the flesh;
The scourge is heavy.
Joseph. Pray you, change the subject.
Richelieu. You good men are so modest! — Well, to business!
Go instantly — deeds — notaries! bid my stewards
Arrange my house by the Luxembourg — *my* house
No more! — a bridal present to my ward,
Who weds to-morrow.
Joseph. Weds, with whom?
Richelieu. De Mauprat.
Joseph. Penniless husband!
Richelieu. Bah! the mate for beauty
Should be a man, and not a money-chest!
When her brave sire lay on his bed of death,
I vow'd to be a father to his Julie; —
And so he died — the smile upon his lips! —
And when I spared the life of her young lover,
Methought I saw that smile again! Who else,

Look you, in all the Court — who else so well,
Brave, or supplant the favorite; — balk the King —
Baffle their schemes? — I have tried him: — He has honor
And courage; — qualities that eagle plume
Men's souls — and fit them for the fiercest sun,
Which ever melted the weak waxen minds
That flutter in the beams of gaudy Power!
Besides, he has taste, this Mauprat: — When my play
Was acted to dull tiers of lifeless gapers,
Who had no soul for poetry, I saw him
Applaud in the proper places; trust me, Joseph,
He is a man of an uncommon promise!
Joseph. And yet your foe.
Richelieu. Have I not foes enow? —
Great men gain doubly when they make foes friends.
Remember my grand maxims: — First employ
All methods to conciliate.
Joseph. Failing these?
Richelieu (*fiercely*). All means to crush; as with the opening, and
The clenching of this little hand, I will
Crush the small venom of these stinging courtiers,
So, so we've baffled Baradas.
Joseph. And when
Check the conspiracy?
Richelieu. Check, check? Full way to it.
Let it bud, ripen, flaunt i' the day, and burst
To fruit, — the Dead Sea's fruit of ashes; ashes
Which I will scatter to the winds. Go, Joseph;
When you return, I have a feast for you:
The last great act of my great play; the verses
Methinks are fine, — ah, very fine. — *You* write
Verses! — (*aside*) *such* verses! — You have wit, discernment.
Joseph (*aside*). Worse than the scourge!
Strange that so great a statesman
Should be so bad a poet.
Richelieu. What dost say?
Joseph. That it is strange so great a statesman should
Be so sublime a poet.
Richelieu. Ah, you rogue;[1]
Laws die, Books never. Of my ministry
I am not vain; but of my muse, I own it.
Come, you shall hear the verses now.
(*Takes up a MS.*)
Joseph. My Lord,
The deeds, the notaries!
Richelieu. True, I pity you;
But business first, then pleasure.
(*Exit* Joseph.)
(*Seats himself, and reading.*) Ah, sublime!

(*Enter* De Mauprat *and* Julie.)

De Mauprat. Oh, speak, my Lord — I dare not think you mock me,
And yet —
Richelieu. Hush, hush — this line must be considered!
Julie. Are we not both your children?
Richelieu. What a couplet!
How now! Oh, sir — you live! —
De Mauprat. Why, no, methinks,
Elysium is not life!
Julie. He smiles! — you smile,
My father! From my heart for ever, now,
I'll blot the name of orphan!
Richelieu. Rise, my children,
For ye are mine — mine both; — and in your sweet
And young delight — your love — (life's first-born glory)
My own lost youth breathes musical!
De Mauprat. I'll seek
Temple and priest henceforward; — were it but
To learn Heaven's choicest blessings.
Richelieu. Thou shalt seek
Temple and priest right soon; the morrow's sun
Shall see across these barren thresholds pass
The fairest bride in Paris. Go, my children:
Even *I* loved once. — Be lovers while ye may.
How is it with you, Sir? You bear it bravely;

You know, it asks the courage of a lion.
(*Exeunt* De Mauprat *and* Julie.)
Oh, godlike Power! Woe, Rapture, Penury, Wealth, —
Marriage and Death, for one infirm old man
Through a great empire to dispense — withhold —
As the will whispers! And shall things — like motes
That live in my daylight — lackies of court wages,
Dwarf'd starvelings — manikins, upon whose shoulders
The burthen of a province were a load
More heavy than the globe on Atlas — cast
Lots for my robes and sceptre? France, I love thee!
All Earth shall never pluck thee from my heart!
My mistress France — my wedded wife — sweet France,
Who shall proclaim divorce for thee and me! (*Exit* Richelieu.)

ACT II

Second Day

Scene I. — *A splendid apartment in* Mauprat's *new house. Casements opening to the gardens, beyond which the domes of the Luxembourg Palace.*

(*Enter* Baradas.)

Baradas. Mauprat's new home: — too splendid for a soldier!
But o'er his floors — the while I stalk — methinks
My shadow spreads gigantic to the gloom
The old rude towers of the Bastile cast far
Along the smoothness of the jocund day
Well, thou hast 'scaped the fierce caprice of Richelieu;
But art thou farther from the headsman, fool?
Thy secret I have whisper'd to the King; —
Thy marriage makes the King thy foe. Thou stand'st
On the abyss — and in the pool below
I see a ghastly, headless phantom mirror'd:
Thy likeness ere the marriage moon hath waned.
Meanwhile — meanwhile — ha, ha — if thou art wedded
Thou art not wived.

(*Enter* Mauprat, *splendidly dressed.*)

De Mauprat. Was ever fate like mine?
So blest, and yet so wretched!
Baradas. Joy, de Mauprat!
Why, what a brow, man, for your wedding-day!
De Mauprat. Jest not. — Distraction!
Baradas. What, your wife a shrew
Already? Courage, man — the common lot!
De Mauprat. Oh, that she were less lovely, or less loved!
Baradas. Riddles again!
De Mauprat. You know what chanced between
The Cardinal and myself.
Baradas. This morning brought
Your letter — a strange account! I laugh'd
And wept at once for gladness.
De Mauprat. We were wed
At noon — the rite performed, came hither — scarce
Arrived, when —
Baradas. Well? —
De Mauprat. Wide flew the doors, and lo,
Messire de Beringhen, and this epistle!
Baradas. 'Tis the King's hand! — the royal seal!
De Mauprat. Read — read!

Baradas (*reading*). "Whereas, Adrien de Mauprat, Colonel and Chevalier in our armies, being already guilty of high treason, by the seizure of our town of Faviaux, has presumed, without our knowledge, consent, or sanction, to connect himself by marriage with Julie de Mortemar, a wealthy orphan attached to the person of Her Majesty, without our knowledge or consent — We do hereby proclaim and declare the said marriage contrary to law. On penalty of death, Adrien de Mauprat will not communicate with the said Julie de Mortemar by word or letter, save in the presence of our faithful servant, the Sieur de Beringhen, and then with such respect and decorum as are due to a Demoiselle attached to the Court of France, until such time as it may suit our royal pleasure to confer with the Holy Church on the formal annulment of the marriage, and with our Council on the punishment to be awarded to Messire de Mauprat, who is cautioned for his own sake to preserve silence as to our injunction, more especially to Mademoiselle de Mortemar. Given under our hand and seal at the Louvre. Louis.” (*Returning the letter.*)

Amazement! — Did not Richelieu say, the King
Knew not your crime?
De Mauprat. He said so.
Baradas. Poor de Mauprat!
See you the snare, the vengeance worse than death,
Of which you are the victim?
De Mauprat. Ha!
Baradas (*aside*). It works!
(Julie *and* De Beringhen *in the gardens.*)
You have not sought the Cardinal yet, to —
De Mauprat. No!
Scarce yet my sense awaken'd from the shock;
Now I will seek him.
Baradas. Hold — beware! Stir not
Till we confer again.
De Mauprat. Speak out, man!
Baradas. Hush!
Your wife! — De Beringhen! — Be on your guard.
Obey the royal orders to the letter.
I'll look around your palace. By my troth,
A princely mansion!
De Mauprat. Stay —
Baradas. So new a bridegroom
Can want no visitors. — Your Servant, Madam.
Oh, happy pair — oh, charming picture!
(*Exit through a side door.*)
Julie. Adrien,
You left us suddenly — are you not well?
De Mauprat. Oh, very well — that is — extremely ill.
Julie. Ill, Adrien? (*Taking his hand.*)
De Mauprat. Not when I see thee.
(*He is about to lift her hand to his lips, when* De Beringhen *coughs, and pulls his mantle.* De Mauprat *drops the hand, and walks away.*)
Julie. Alas!
Should he not love me?
De Beringhen (*aside*). Have a care, I must
Report each word, each gesture to his Majesty.
De Mauprat. Sir, if you were not in his Majesty's service,
You'd be the most officious, impudent,
Damn'd busy-body ever interfering
In a man's family affairs.
De Beringhen. But as
I do belong, Sir, to his Majesty —
De Mauprat. You're lucky! — Still, were we a story higher,
'Twere prudent not to go too near the window.
Julie. Adrien, what have I done? Say, am I changed
Since yesterday? — or was it but for wealth,
Ambition, life — that — that — you swore you loved me?
De Mauprat. I shall go mad! I do, indeed I do —
De Beringhen (*aside*). Not love her! that were highly disrespectful.
Julie. You do — what, Adrien?
De Mauprat. Oh! I do, indeed —
I do think, that this weather is delightful!
A charming day! the sky is so serene!
And what a prospect! —
(*To* De Beringhen.) Oh! you Popinjay!
Julie. He jests at me! — he mocks me! — yet I love him,
And every look becomes the lips we love!
Perhaps I am too grave? — You laugh at Julie;
If laughter please you, welcome be the music!
Only say, Adrien, that you love me.
De Mauprat (*kissing her hand*). Ay;
With my whole heart I love you! —
Now, Sir, go,
And tell that to his Majesty! Whoever

Heard of its being a state-offence to kiss
The hand of one's own wife?
Julie. He says he loves me,
And starts away, as if to say "I love you"
Meant something *very* dreadful. — Come, sit by me, —
I place your chair! — fie on your gallantry!
(*They sit down; as he pushes his chair back, she draws hers nearer.*)
Why must this strange Messire de Beringhen
Be always here? He never takes a hint.
Do you not wish him gone?
De Mauprat. Upon my soul
I do, my Julie! — Send him for your *bouquet*,
Your glove, your — anything —
Julie. Messire de Beringhen,
I dropp'd my glove in the gardens by the fountain,
Or the alcove, or — stay — no, by the statue
Of Cupid; may I ask you to —
De Beringhen. To send for it?
Certainly. (*Ringing a bell on the table.*)
André, Pierre, (your rascals, how
Do ye call them?)

(*Enter Servants.*)

Ah — *Madame* has dropp'd her glove
In the gardens, by the fountain, or the alcove;
Or — stay — no, by the statue — eh? — of Cupid.
Bring it.
De Mauprat. Did ever now one pair of shoulders
Carry such waggon-loads of impudence
Into a gentleman's drawing-room?
Dear Julie,
I'm busy — letters — visitors — the devil!
I do beseech you leave me — I say — leave me.
Julie (*weeping*). You are unkind.
(*Exit. As she goes out,* Mauprat *drops on one knee, and kisses the hem of her mantle, unseen by her.*)
De Beringhen. Ten millions of apologies —
De Mauprat. I'll not take one of them.
I have, as yet,
Withstood, all things — my heart — my love — my rights.
But Julie's tears! — When is this farce to end?
De Beringhen. Oh! when you please.
His Majesty requests me,
As soon as you infringe his gracious orders,
To introduce you to the Governor
Of the Bastile. I should have had that honor
Before, but, gad, my foible is good nature.
One can't be hard upon a friend's infirmities.
De Mauprat. I know the King can send me to the scaffold.
Dark prospect! — but I'm used to it; and if
The Church and Council, by this hour to-morrow,
One way or other settle not the matter,
I will —
De Beringhen. What, my dear Sir?
De Mauprat. Show you the door,
My dear, dear Sir; talk as I please, with whom
I please, in my own house, dear Sir, until
His Majesty shall condescend to find
A stouter gentleman than you, dear Sir,
To take me out: and now you understand me,
My dear, most dear — Oh, damnably dear Sir!
De Beringhen. What! almost in a passion! you will cool
Upon reflection. Well, since *Madame's* absent,
I'll take a small refreshment. Now, don't stir;
Be careful; — how's your burgundy? — I'll taste it —
Finish it all before I leave. Nay,
No form; — you see I make myself at home. (*Exit* De Beringhen.)
De Mauprat (*going to the door, through which* Baradas *had passed*). Baradas! Count!

(*Enter* Baradas.)

You spoke of snares — of vengeance
Sharper than death — be plainer.

Baradas. What so clear?
Richelieu has but two passions —
De Mauprat. Richelieu!
Baradas. Yes!
Ambition and revenge — in you both blended.
First for ambition — Julie is his ward,
Innocent — docile — pliant to his will —
He placed her at the Court — foresaw the rest —
The King loves Julie!
De Mauprat. Merciful Heaven! The King!
Baradas. Such Cupids lend new plumes to Richelieu's wings:
But the Court etiquette must give such Cupids
The veil of Hymen — (Hymen but in name).
He looked abroad — found you his foe; — *thus* served
Ambition — by the grandeur of his ward.
And vengeance — by dishonor to his foe!
De Mauprat. Prove this.
Baradas. You have the proof —
The royal Letter: —
Your strange exemption from the general pardon,
Known but to me and Richelieu; can you doubt
Your friend to acquit your foe? The truth is glaring —
Richelieu alone could tell the princely lover
The tale which sells your life, — or buys your honor!
De Mauprat. I see it all! Mock pardon — hurried nuptials!
False bounty! — all! — the serpent of that smile!
Oh! it stings home!
Baradas. You yet shall crush his malice;
Our plans are sure: — Orleans is at our head;
We meet to-night; join us, and with us triumph.
De Mauprat. To-night? — Oh Heaven! — my marriage night! — Revenge!
"Baradas. What class of men, whose white lips do not curse
"The grim, insatiate, universal tyrant?
"We, noble-born — where are our antique rights —
"Our feudal seignories — our castled strength,
"That did divide us from the base Plebeians
"And made our swords our law — where are they? — trod
"To dust — and o'er the graves of our dead power
"Scaffolds are monuments — the Kingly House
"Shorn of its beams — the Royal Sun of France
"'Clips'd by this blood-red comet. Where we turn,
"Nothing but Richelieu! — Armies — Church — State — Laws
"But mirrors that do multiply his beams.
"He sees all — acts all — Argus and Briaræus —
"Spy at our boards — and death's-man at our hearths,
"Under the venom of one laidley nightshade,
"Wither the lilies of all France.
"De Mauprat (*impatiently*). But Julie —"
"Baradas (*unheeding him*). As yet the Fiend that serves hath saved his power
"From every snare; and in the epitaphs
"Of many victims dwells a warning moral
"That preaches caution. Were I not assured
"That what before was hope is ripen'd now
"Into most certain safety, trust me, Mauprat,
"I still could hush my hate and mark my wrongs
"And say 'Be patient!' — *Now*, the King himself
"Smiles kindly when I tell him that his peers
"Will rid him of his Priest. You knit your brows,
"Noble impatience!" — Pass we to our scheme!
'Tis Richelieu's wont, each morn, within his chapel,
(Hypocrite worship ended) to dispense
Alms to the Mendicant friars, — in that guise

A band (yourself the leader) shall surround
And seize the despot.
De Mauprat. But the King? but Julie?
Baradas. The King, infirm in health, in mind more feeble,
Is but the plaything of a Minister's will.
Were Richelieu dead — his power were mine; and Louis
Soon shall forget his passion and your crime.
But whither now?
De Mauprat. I know not; I scarce hear thee;
A little while for thought anon I'll join thee;
But now, all air seems tainted, and I loathe
The face of man!
(*Exit* De Mauprat, *through the gardens.*)
Baradas. Start from the chase, my prey,
But as thou speed'st the hell-hounds of Revenge
Pant in thy track and dog thee down.

(*Enter* De Beringhen, *his mouth full, a napkin in his hand.*)

De Beringhen. Chevalier,
Your cook's a miracle — what, my Host gone?
Faith, Count, my office is a post of danger —
A fiery fellow, Mauprat! — touch and go, —
Match and saltpetre, — pr-r-r-r!
Baradas. You
Will be released ere long. The King resolves
To call the bride to Court this day.
De Beringhen. Poor Mauprat!
Yet, since *you* love the lady why so careless
Of the King's suit!
Baradas. Because the lady's virtuous,
And the King timid. Ere he win the suit
He'll lose the crown, — the bride will be a widow —
And I — the Richelieu of the Regent Orleans.
De Beringhen. Is Louis still so chafed against the Fox,
For snatching yon fair dainty from the Lion?
Baradas. So chafed that Richelieu totters. Yes, the King
Is half conspirator against the Cardinal.
Enough of this. I've found the man we wanted, —
The man to head the hands that murder Richelieu —
The man, whose name the synonym for daring.
De Beringhen. He must mean me No, Count, I am — I own,
A valiant dog — but still —
Baradas. Whom can I mean!
But Mauprat? — Mark, to-night we meet at Marion's,
There shall we sign: — thence send this scroll (*showing it*) to Bouillon.
You're in that secret (*affectionately*) one of our new Council.
De Beringhen. But to admit the Spaniard — France's foe —
Into the heart of France, — dethrone the King, —
It looks like treason, and I smell the headsman.
Baradas. Oh, Sir, too late to falter: when we meet
We must arrange the separate — coarser scheme,
For Richelieu's death. Of this despatch Mauprat
Must nothing learn. He only bites at vengeance,
And he would start from treason. — We must post him
Without the door at Marion's — as a sentry.
(*Aside.*) — So, when his head is on the block — his tongue —
Cannot betray our more august designs!
De Beringhen. I'll meet you, if the King can spare me. — (*Aside.*) — No!
I am too old a goose to play with foxes,
I'll roost at home. Meanwhile in the next room
There's a delicious pâté, let's discuss it.
Baradas. Pshaw! a man fill'd with a sublime ambition
Has no time to discuss your pâtés.

De Beringhen. Pshaw!
And a man fill'd with as sublime a pâté
Has no time to discuss ambition. — Gad,
I have the best of it!

(*Enter* Julie *hastily with* First Courtier.)

Julie (*to* Courtier). A summons, Sir,
To attend the Louvre? — On *this* day, too?
Courtier. *Madame*,
The royal carriage waits below. — Messire (*to* De Beringhen)
You will return with us.
Julie. What can this mean? —
Where is my husband?
Baradas. He has left the house
Perhaps till nightfall — so he bade me tell you.
Alas, were I the Lord of such fair treasure —
Julie (*impatiently*). Till nightfall? — Strange — my heart misgives me!
Courtier. *Madame*,
My orders will not brook delay.
Julie (*to* Baradas). You'll see him —
And you will tell him!
Baradas. From the flowers of Hybla
Never more gladly did the bee bear honey,
Than I take sweetness from those rosiest lips,
Though to the hive of others!
Courtier (*to* De Beringhen). Come, Messire.
De Beringhen (*hesitating*). One moment, just to —
Courtier. Come, Sir.
De Beringhen. I shall not
Discuss the pâté after all. 'Ecod,
I'm puzzled now. I don't know who's the best of it!

(*Exeunt* Julie, De Beringhen, *and* Courtier.)

Baradas. Now will this fire his fever into madness!
All is made clear! Mauprat *must* murder Richelieu —
Die for that crime; — I shall console his Julie —
This will reach Bouillon! — from the wrecks of France
I shall carve out — who knows — perchance a throne!
All in despite of my Lord Cardinal.

(*Enter* De Mauprat *from the gardens.*)

De Mauprat. Speak! can it be? — Methought, that from the terrace
I saw the carriage of the King — and Julie!
No, — no, — my frenzy peoples the void air
With its own phantoms!
Baradas. Nay, too true. Alas!
Was ever lightning swifter or more blasting,
Than Richelieu's forkèd guile?
De Mauprat. I'll to the Louvre —
Baradas. And lose all hope! — The Louvre! — the sure gate
To the Bastile!
De Mauprat. The King —
Baradas. Is but the wax,
Which Richelieu stamps! Break the malignant seal
And I will rase the print! Come, man, take heart!
Her virtue well could brave a sterner trial
Than a few hours of cold imperious courtship.
Were Richelieu *dust* — no danger!
De Maufrat. Ghastly Vengeance!
To thee and thine august and solemn sister
The unrelenting Death! I dedicate
The blood of Armand Richelieu. When Dishonor
Reaches our hearths Law dies, and Murther takes
The angel shape of Justice!
Baradas. Bravely said!
At midnight, — Marion's! — Nay, I cannot leave thee
To thoughts that —
De Mauprat. Speak not to me! —
I am yours! —
But speak not! There's a voice within my soul,
Whose cry could drown the thunder! — Oh, if men
Will play dark sorcery with the heart of man,
Let them, who raise the spell, beware the Fiend! (*Exeunt.*)

Scene II. — *A room in the Palais Cardinal (as in the First Act).*

(Richelieu *and* Joseph. François, *writing at a table.*)

Joseph. Yes; — Huguet, taking his accustom'd round, —
Disguised as some plain burgher, — heard these rufflers
Quoting your name: — he listen'd, — "Pshaw!" said one.
"We are to seize the Cardinal in his palace
To-morrow!" — "How?" the other ask'd: — "You'll hear
The whole design to-night; the Duke of Orleans
And Baradas have got the map of action
At their fingers' end." — "So be it," quoth the other,
"I will be there, — Marion de Lorme's — at midnight!"

Richelieu. I have them, man, I have them!

Joseph. So they say
Of you, my Lord; — believe me, that their plans
Are mightier than you deem. You must employ
Means no less vast to meet them.

Richelieu. Bah! in policy
We foil gigantic danger, not by giants,
But dwarfs. — The statues of our stately fortune
Are sculptured by the chisel — not the axe!
Ah, were I younger — by the knightly heart
That beats beneath these priestly robes, I would
Have pastime with these cutthroats! Yea — as when,
Lured to the ambush of the expecting foe, —
I clove my pathway through the plumèd sea!
Reach me yon falchion, François, — not that bauble
For carpet-warriors — yonder — such a blade
As old Charles Martel might have wielded, when
He drove the Saracen from France.

(François *brings him one of the long two-handed swords worn in the middle ages.*)

With this
I, at Rochelle, did hand to hand engage
The stalwart Englisher — no mongrels, boy,
Those island mastiffs — mark the notch — a deep one —
His casque made here, — I shore him to the waist!
A toy — a feather — then! (*Tries to wield, and lets it fall.*) You see a child could
Slay Richelieu now.

François (*his hand on his hilt*). But now, at your command
Are other weapons, my good Lord.

Richelieu (*who has seated himself as to write, lifts the pen*). True, This!
Beneath the rule of men entirely great
The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold
The arch-enchanter's wand! — itself a nothing!
But taking sorcery from the master hand
To paralyse the Cæsars — and to strike
The loud earth breathless! — Take away the sword;
States can be saved without it!
(*Looking on the clock.*) 'Tis the hour, —
Retire, sir. (*Exit* François.)

(*A knock — A door concealed in the arras opens cautiously.*)

(*Enter* Marion de Lorme.)

Joseph (*amazed*). Marion de Lorme!

Richelieu. Hist! — Joseph,
Keep guard.

(Joseph *retires to the principal entrance.*)

My faithful Marion!

Marion. Good my Lord,
They meet to-night in my poor house. The Duke
Of Orleans heads them.

Richelieu. Yes; go on.

Marion. His Highness
Much question'd if I knew some brave, discreet,
And vigilant man, whose tongue could keep a secret,

And who had those twin qualities for service,
The love of gold, the hate of Richelieu.
RICHELIEU. You —
MARION. Made answer, "Yes, my brother; — bold and trusty:
Whose faith, my faith could pledge;" — the Duke then bade me
Have him equipp'd and arm'd — well mounted — ready
This night to part for Italy.
RICHELIEU. Aha! —
Has Bouillon too turn'd traitor? — So methought!
What part of Italy?
MARION. The Piedmont frontier,
Where Bouillon lies encamp'd.
RICHELIEU. Now there is danger!
Great danger! If he tamper with the Spaniard,
And Louis list not to my council, as,
Without sure proof he will not, France is lost.
What more?
MARION. Dark hints of some design to seize
Your person in your palace. Nothing clear —
His Highness trembled while he spoke — the words
Did choke each other.
RICHELIEU. So! — Who is the brother
You recommended to the Duke?
MARION. Whoever
Your Eminence may father!
RICHELIEU. Darling Marion!
(*Goes to the table, and returns with a large bag of gold.*)
There — pshaw — a trifle! What an eye you have!
And what a smile, child! (*Kisses her.*) — Ah! you fair perdition —
'Tis well I'm old!
MARION (*aside and seriously*). What a great man he is!
RICHELIEU. You are sure they meet? — the hour?
MARION. At midnight.
RICHELIEU. And
You will engage to give the Duke's despatch
To whom I send?
MARION. Aye, Marry!
RICHELIEU (*aside*). Huguet? No;
He will be wanted elsewhere. Joseph? — zealous,
But too well known — too much the *elder* brother!
Mauprat? — alas, it is his wedding-day!
François? — the Man of Men! — unnoted — young
Ambitious — (*goes to the door*) François!

(*Enter* FRANÇOIS.)

Follow this fair lady:
(Find him the suiting garments, Marion;) take
My fleetest steed; arm thyself to the teeth;
A packet will be given you, with orders,
No matter what! The instant that your hand
Closes upon it, clutch *it*, like your honor,
Which Death alone can steal, or ravish: set
Spurs to your steed — be breathless, till you stand
Again before me. Stay, Sir! — You will find me
Two short leagues hence — at Ruelle, in my castle.
Young man, be blithe! for — note me — from the hour
I grasp that packet, think your guardian star
Rains fortune on you!
FRANÇOIS. If I fail —
RICHELIEU. Fail — fail?
In the lexicon of youth, which Fate reserves
For a bright manhood, there is no such word
As — *fail!* — (You will instruct him further, Marion) —
Follow her — but at distance; — speak not to her,
Till you are housed. — Farewell, boy! Never say
"*Fail*" again.
FRANÇOIS. I will not!
RICHELIEU (*patting his locks*). There's my young hero! —
(*Exeunt* FRANÇOIS *and* MARION.)

So they would seize my person in this palace?
I cannot guess their scheme: — but my retinue
Is here too large! A single traitor could
Strike impotent the faith of thousands; — Joseph,
Art sure of Huguet? — Think — we hang’d his father?
Joseph. But you have bought the son; — heap’d favors on him!
Richelieu. Trash! — favors past — that’s nothing; in his hours
Of confidence with you, has he named the favors
To *come* he counts on?
Joseph. Yes: — a Colonel’s rank,
And Letters of Nobility.
Richelieu. What, Huguet! —
(*Here* Huguet *enters, as to address the* Cardinal, *who does not perceive him.*)

Huguet. My own name, soft —
(*Glides behind the screen.*)

Richelieu. Colonel and Nobleman!
My bashful Huguet — that can never be! —
We have him not the less — we’ll *promise* it!
And see the King withholds! — Ah, Kings are oft
A great convenience to a minister!
No wrong to Huguet either! — Moralists
Say, Hope is sweeter than Possession! Yes —
We’ll count on Huguet! Favors *past* do gorge
Our dogs; leave service drowsy — *dull* the scent,
Slacken the speed; — favors *to come*, my Joseph,
Produce a lusty, hungry gratitude,
A ravenous zeal, that of the commonest cur
Would make a Cerberus. — You are right, this treason
Assumes a fearful aspect; — but once crush’d,
Its very ashes shall manure the soil
Of power: and ripen such full sheaves of greatness,
That all the summer of my fate shall seem
Fruitless beside the autumn!
(Huguet *holds up his hand menacingly, and creeps out.*)
Joseph. The saints grant it!
Richelieu (*solemnly*). Yes — for sweet France, Heaven grant it! — O my country,
For thee — thee only — though men deem it not —
Are toil and terror my familiars! — I
Have made thee great and fair — upon thy brows
Wreath’d the old Roman laurel; — at thy feet
Bow’d nations down. — No pulse in my ambition
Whose beatings were not measured from thy heart!
“In the old times before us, patriots lived
“And died for liberty —
“Joseph. As you would live
“And die for despotry —
“Richelieu. False monk, not so,
“But for the purple and the power wherein
“State clothes herself. — I love my native land
“Not as Venetian, Englisher, or Swiss,
“But as a Noble and a Priest of France;
“‘All things for France’ — lo, my eternal maxim!
“The vital axle of the restless wheels
“That bear me on! With her, I have entwined
“My passions and my fate — my crimes, my virtues —
“Hated and loved, and schemed, and shed men’s blood,
“As the calm crafts of Tuscan ages teach
“Those who would make their country great. Beyond
“The map of France, my heart can travel not,
“But fills that limit to its farthest verge;
“And while I live — Richelieu and France are one.”
We Priests, to whom the Church forbids in youth
The plighted one — to manhood’s toil denies
The soother helpmate — from our wither’d age

Shuts the sweet blossoms of the second spring
That smiles in the name of Father — We are yet
Not holier than Humanity and must
Fulfil Humanity's condition — Love!
Debarr'd the Actual, we but breathe a life
To the chill Marble of the Ideal — Thus,
In thy unseen and abstract Majesty,
My France — my Country, I have bodied forth
A thing to love. What are these robes of state,
This pomp, this palace? perishable baubles!
In this world two things only are immortal:
Fame and a People!

(*Enter* Huguet.)

Huguet. My Lord Cardinal,
Your Eminence bade me seek you at this hour.
Richelieu. Did I? — True, Huguet. — So — you overheard
Strange talk amongst these gallants? Snares and traps
For Richelieu? — Well — we'll balk them; let me think, —
The men-at-arms you head — how many?
Huguet. Twenty,
My Lord.
Richelieu. All trusty?
Huguet. Yes, for ordinary
Occasions — if for great ones, I would change
Three-fourths at least!
Richelieu. Ay, what are great occasions?
Huguet. Great bribes!
Richelieu (*to* Joseph). Good lack, he knows some paragons
Superior to great bribes!
Huguet. True Gentlemen
Who have transgress'd the Laws — and value life
And lack not gold; your Eminence alone
Can grant them pardon. *Ergo* you can trust them!
Richelieu. Logic! — So be it — let this *honest* twenty
Be arm'd and mounted. — (*Aside.*) So they meet at midnight,
The attempt on me to-morrow. Ho! we'll strike
'Twixt wind and water. — (*Aloud.*) Does it need much time
To find these ornaments to Human Nature?
Huguet. My Lord — the trustiest of them are not birds
That love the daylight. — I do know a haunt
Where they meet nightly.
Richelieu. Ere the dawn be grey,
All could be arm'd, assembled, and at Ruelle
In my own hall?
Huguet. By one hour after midnight.
Richelieu. The castle's strong. You know its outlets, Huguet?
Would twenty men, well posted, keep such guard
That no one step (and Murther's step is stealthy)
Could glide within — unseen?
Huguet. A triple wall,
A drawbridge and portcullis — twenty men —
Under my lead, a month might hold that castle
Against a host.
Richelieu. They do not strike till morning,
Yet I will shift the quarter — Bid the grooms
Prepare the litter — I will to Ruelle
While daylight last — and one hour after midnight
You and your twenty saints shall seek me thither!
You're made to rise! — You are, Sir — Eyes of lynx,
Ears of the stag, a footfall like the snow;
You are a valiant fellow; — yea, a trusty,
Religious, exemplary, incorrupt,
And precious jewel of a fellow, Huguet!
If I live long enough — ay, mark my words —
If I live long enough, you'll be a Colonel, —
Noble, perhaps! — One hour, Sir, after midnight.
Huguet. You leave me dumb with gratitude, my lord;

I'll pick the trustiest (*aside*) Marion's house can furnish! (*Exit* Huguet.)
Richelieu. How like a spider shall I sit in my hole,
And watch the meshes tremble.
Joseph. But, my Lord,
Were it not wiser still to man the palace,
And seize the traitors in the act?
Richelieu. No; Louis,
Long chafed against me — Julie stolen from him,
Will rouse him more. — He'll say I hatch'd the treason,
Or scout my charge — He half desires my death:
But the despatch to Bouillon, some dark scheme
Against *his* crown — there is our weapon, Joseph!
With that all safe — without it, all is peril!
Meanwhile to my old castle; *you* to Court,
Diving with careless eyes into men's hearts —
As ghostly churchmen should do! See the King,
Bid him pursue that sage and holy treatise,
Wherein 'tis set forth how a Premier should
Be chosen from the Priesthood — how the King
Should never listen to a single charge
Against his servant, nor conceal one whisper
That the rank envies of a Court distill
Into his ear — to fester the fair name
Of my — I mean his Minister! — Oh! Joseph,
A most convincing treatise.
Good! all favors,
If François be but bold, and Huguet honest. —
Huguet — I half suspect — he bow'd too low —
'Tis not his way.
Joseph. This is the curse, my Lord,
Of your high state; — suspicion of all men.
Richelieu (*sadly*). True; — true; — my leeches bribed to poisoners; — pages
To strangle me in sleep. — My very King
(This brain the unresting loom, from which was woven
The purple of his greatness) leagued against me.
Old — childless — friendless — broken — all forsake —
All — all — but —
Joseph. What?
Richelieu. The indomitable heart
Of Armand Richelieu!
Joseph. Nought beside?
Richelieu. Why, Julie,
My own foster-child, forgive me! — yes;
This morning, shining through their happy tears,
Thy soft eyes bless'd me! and thy Lord, — in danger
He would forsake me not.
Joseph. And Joseph —
Richelieu (*after a pause*). You —
Yes, I believe you — yes — for all men fear you —
And the world loves you not. — And I, friend Joseph,
I am the only man who could, my Joseph,
Make you a Bishop — Come, we'll go to dinner,
And talk the while of methods to advance
Our Mother Church — Ah, Joseph — *Bishop Joseph!* (*Exeunt.*)

ACT III

Second Day — *Midnight.*

Scene I. — Richelieu's *castle at Ruelle. — A Gothic chamber. — Moonlight at the window, occasionally obscured.*

Richelieu (*reading*). "In silence, and at night, the Conscience feels
That life should soar to nobler ends than Power."
So sayest thou, sage and sober moralist!
But wert thou tried? Sublime Philosophy,
Thou art the Patriarch's ladder, reaching heaven,
And bright with beck'ning angels — but, alas!
We see thee, like the Patriarch, but in dreams,
By the first step — dull-slumbering on the earth.
I am not happy! — with the Titan's lust,
I woo'd a goddess, and I clasp a cloud.

When I am dust, my name shall, like a star,
Shine through wan space, a glory — and a prophet
Whereby pale seers shall from their aery towers
Con all the ominous signs, benign or evil,
That make the potent astrologue of kings.
But shall the Future judge me by the ends
That I have wrought — or by the dubious means
Through which the stream of my renown hath run
Into the many-voiced unfathomed Time?
Foul in its bed lie weeds — and heaps of slime,
And with its waves — when sparkling in the sun,
Oft times the secret rivulets that swell
Its might of waters — blend the hues of blood.
Yet are my sins not those of CIRCUMSTANCE,
That all-pervading atmosphere wherein
Our spirits like the unsteady lizard, take
The tints that color, and the food that nurtures?
Oh! ye, whose hour-glass shifts its tranquil sands
In the unvex’d silence of a student’s cell;
Ye, whose untempted hearts have never toss’d
Upon the dark and stormy tides where life
Gives battle to the elements, — and man
Wrestles with man for some slight plank, whose weight
Will bear but one — while round the desperate wretch
The hungry billows roar — and the fierce Fate,
Like some huge monster, dim-seen through the surf,
Waits him who drops; — ye safe and formal men,
Who write the deeds, and with unfeverish hand
Weigh in nice scales the motives of the Great,
Ye cannot know what ye have never tried!
History preserves only the fleshless bones
Of what we are — and by the mocking skull
The would-be wise pretend to guess the features!
Without the roundness and the glow of life
How hideous is the skeleton! Without
The colorings and humanities that clothe
Our errors, the anatomists of schools
Can make our memory hideous!
I have wrought
Great uses out of evil tools — and they
In the time to come may bask beneath the light
Which I have stolen from the angry gods,
And warn their sons against the glorious theft,
Forgetful of the darkness which it broke.
I have shed blood — but I have had no foes
Save those the State had — if my wrath was deadly,
’Tis that I felt my country in my veins,
And smote her sons as Brutus smote his own.
And yet I am not happy — blanch’d and sear’d
Before my time — breathing an air of hate,
And seeing daggers in the eyes of men,
And wasting powers that shake the thrones of earth
In contest with the insects — bearding kings
And braved by lackies — murder at my bed;
And lone amidst the multitudinous web,
With the dread Three — that are the fates who hold
The woof and shears — the Monk, the Spy, the Headsman.
And this is Power! Alas! I am not happy.
(*After a pause.*) And yet the Nile is fretted by the weeds
Its rising roots not up: but never yet
Did one least barrier by a ripple vex
My onward tide, unswept in sport away.
Am I so ruthless then that I do hate
Them who hate me? Tush, tush! I do not hate;
Nay, I forgive. The Statesman writes the doom,

But the Priest sends the blessing. I forgive them,
But I destroy; forgiveness is my own,
Destruction is the State's! For private life,
Scripture the guide — for public, Machiavel.
Would Fortune serve me if the Heaven were wroth?
For chance makes half my greatness. I was born
Beneath the aspect of a bright-eyed star,
And my triumphant adamant of soul
Is but the fix'd persuasion of success.
Ah! — here! — that spasm! — Again! How Life and Death
Do wrestle for me momently! And yet
The King looks pale. I shall outlive the King!
And then, thou insolent Austrian — who didst gibe
At the ungainly, gaunt, and daring lover,
Sleeking thy looks to silken Buckingham, —
Thou shalt — no matter! I have outlived love.
O! beautiful — all golden — gentle Youth!
Making thy palace in the careless front
And hopeful eye of man — ere yet the soul
Hath lost the memories which (so Plato dream'd)
Breath'd glory from the earlier star it dwelt in —
O! for one gale from thine exulting morning,
Stirring amidst the roses, where of old
Love shook the dew-drops from his glancing hair!
Could I recall the past — or had not set
The prodigal treasures of the bankrupt soul
In one slight bark upon the shoreless sea;
The yoked steer, after his day of toil,
Forgets the goad and rests — to me alike
Or day or night — Ambition has no rest!
Shall I resign — who can resign himself?
For custom is ourself; — as drink and food
Become our bone and flesh — the aliments
Nurturing our nobler part, the mind — thoughts, dreams,
Passions, and aims, in the revolving cycle
Of the great alchemy — at length are made
Our mind itself; and yet the sweets of leisure —
An honor'd home — far from these base intrigues —
An eyrie on the heaven-kiss'd heights of wisdom.
(*Taking up the book.*) Speak to me, moralist! I will heed thy counsel.
Were it not best —

(*Enter* François *hastily, and in part disguised.*)

Richelieu (*flinging away the book*). Philosophy, thou liest!
Quick — the despatch! — Power — Empire! Boy — the packet!
François. Kill me, my Lord.
Richelieu. They knew thee — they suspected —
They gave it not —
François. He gave it — *he* — the Count
De Baradas — with his own hand he gave it!
Richelieu. Baradas! Joy! out with it!
François. Listen,
And then dismiss me to the headsman.
Richelieu. Ha!
Go on.
François. They led me to a chamber — There
Orleans and Baradas — and some half-score
Whom I knew not — were met —
Richelieu. Not more!
François. But from
The adjoining chamber broke the din of voices,
The clattering tread of armed men; — at times
A shriller cry, that yell'd out, "Death to Richelieu!"
Richelieu. Speak not of *me:* thy *country* is in danger!
The adjoining room. — So, so — a *separate* treason!
The one thy ruin, France! — the meaner crime,
Left to their tools, my murder!
François. Baradas

Questioned me close — demurr'd — until, at last,
O'erruled by Orleans, — gave the packet — told me
That life and death were in the scroll — this gold —
Richelieu. Gold is no proof —
François. And Orleans promised thousands,
When Bouillon's trumpets in the streets of Paris
Rang out shrill answer; hastening from the house,
My footstep in the stirrup, Marion stole
Across the threshold, whispering, "Lose no moment
Ere Richelieu have the packet: tell him too —
Murder is in the winds of Night and Orleans
Swears, ere the dawn the Cardinal shall be clay."
She said, and trembling fled within; when, lo!
A hand of iron griped me; thro' the dark
Gleam'd the dim shadow of an armed man:
Ere I could draw — the prize was wrested from me,
And a hoarse voice gasp'd — "Spy, I spare thee, for
This steel is virgin to thy Lord!" — with that
He vanish'd. — Scared and trembling for thy safety,
I mounted, fled, and, kneeling at thy feet,
Implore thee to acquit my faith — but not,
Like him, to spare my life.
Richelieu. Who spake of *life?*
I bade thee grasp that treasure as thine *honor* —
A jewel worth whole hecatombs of lives!
Begone — redeem thine honor — back to Marion —
Or Baradas or Orleans — track the robber —
Regain the packet — or crawl on to Age —
Age and grey hairs like mine — and know, thou hast lost
That which had made thee great and saved thy country.
See me not till thou'st bought the right to seek me.
Away! — Nay, cheer thee — thou hast not fail'd yet —
There's no such word as "fail!"
François. Bless you, my Lord,
For that one smile! I'll wear it on my heart
To light me back to triumph. (*Exit.*)
Richelieu. The poor youth!
An elder had ask'd life! I love the young!
For as great men live not in their own time
But the next race, — so in the young, my soul
Makes many Richelieus. He will win it yet.
François! He's gone. My murder! Marion's warning!
This bravo's threat! O for the morrow's dawn! —
I'll set my spies to work — I'll make all space
(As does the sun) an Universal Eye —
Huguet shall track — Joseph confess — ha! ha!
Strange, while I laugh'd I shudder'd, and ev'n now
Thro' the chill air the beating of my heart
Sounds like a death-watch by a sick man's pillow;
If Huguet *could* deceive me — hoofs without —
The gates unclose — steps near and nearer!

(*Enter* Julie.)

Julie. Cardinal!
My father! (*Falls at his feet.*)
Richelieu. Julie at this hour! — and tears!
What ails thee?
Julie. I am safe; I am with thee! —
Richelieu. Safe! why in all the storms of this wild world
What wind would mar the violet?
Julie. That man —
Why did I love him? — clinging to a breast
That knows no shelter?
Listen — late at noon —
The marriage-day — ev'n then no more a lover —

He left me coldly, — well, — I sought my chamber
To weep and wonder — but to hope and dream.
Sudden a mandate from the King — to attend
Forthwith his pleasure at the Louvre.
Richelieu. Ha! —
You did obey the summons; and the King
Reproach'd your hasty nuptials. —
Julie. Were that all!
He frown'd and chid; — proclaim'd the bond unlawful:
Bade me not quit my chamber in the palace,
And there at night — alone — this night — all still —
He sought my presence — dared — thou read'st the heart,
Read mine! — I cannot speak it!
Richelieu. He a king, —
You — woman; well, you yielded!
Julie. Cardinal —
Dare you say "yielded"? — Humbled and abash'd,
He from the chamber crept — this mighty Louis;
Crept like a baffled felon! — yielded! Ah!
More royalty in woman's honest heart
Than dwells within the crowned majesty
And sceptred anger of a hundred kings!
Yielded! — Heavens! — yielded!
Richelieu. To my breast, — close — close!
The world would never need a Richelieu, if
Men — bearded, mailed men — the Lords of Earth —
Resisted flattery, falsehood, avarice, pride,
As this poor child with the dove's innocent scorn
Her sex's tempters, Vanity and Power! —
He left you — well!
Julie. Then came a sharper trial!
At the King's suit the Count de Baradas
Sought me to soothe, to fawn, to flatter, while
On his smooth lip insult appear'd more hateful
For the false mask of pity: letting fall
Dark hints of treachery, with a world of sighs
That heaven had granted to so base a Lord
The heart whose coldest friendship were to him
What Mexico to misers! Stung at last
By my disdain, the dim and glimmering sense
Of his cloak'd words broke into bolder light,
And THEN — ah, then, my haughty spirit fail'd me!
Then I was weak — wept — oh! such bitter tears!
For (turn thy face aside, and let me whisper
The horror to thine ear) then did I learn
That he — that Adrien — that my husband — knew
The King's polluting suit, and deemed it *honor!*
Then all the terrible and loathsome truth
Glared on me; — coldness — waywardness — reserve —
Mystery of looks — words — all unravell'd, — and
I saw the impostor, where I had loved the God! —
Richelieu. I think thou wrong'st thy husband — but proceed.
Julie. Did you say "wrong'd" him? — Cardinal, my father,
Did you say "wrong'd"? Prove it, and life shall grow
One prayer for thy reward and his forgiveness.
Richelieu. Let me know all.
Julie. To the despair he caused
The courtier left me; but amid the chaos
Darted one guiding ray — to 'scape — to fly —
Reach Adrien, learn the worst — 'twas then near midnight;
Trembling I left my chamber — sought the Queen —
Fell at her feet — reveal'd the unholy peril —
Implored her to aid to flee our joint disgrace.
Moved, she embraced and soothed me; nay, preserved;

Her word sufficed to unlock the palace-gates:
I hasten'd home — but home was desolate, —
No Adrien there! Fearing the worst, I fled
To thee, directed hither. As my wheels
Paused at thy gates — the clang of arms behind —
The ring of hoofs —
Richelieu. 'Twas but my guards, fair trembler.
(So Huguet keeps his word, my omens wrong'd him.)
Julie. Oh, in one hour what years of anguish crowd!
Richelieu. Nay, there's no danger now. Thou need'st rest.
Come thou shalt lodge beside me. Tush! be cheer'd,
My rosiest Amazon — thou wrong'st thy Theseus.
All will be well — yes, yet all well.
(*Exeunt through a side door.*)

Scene II. — *The moonlight obscured at the casement.*

(*Enter* Huguet. De Mauprat, *in complete armor, his vizor down.*)

Huguet. Not here!
De Mauprat. Oh, I will find him, fear not. Hence, and guard
The galleries where the menials sleep — plant sentries
At every outlet. Chance should throw no shadow
Between the vengeance and the victim! Go!
Ere yon brief vapor that obscures the moon,
As doth our deed pale conscience, pass away,
The mighty shall be ashes.
Huguet. Will you not
A second arm?
De Mauprat. To slay one weak old man?
Away! No lesser wrongs than mine can make
This murder lawful. — Hence!
Huguet. A short farewell!
(*Exit.*)

(*Re-enter* Richelieu, *not perceiving* De Mauprat.)

Richelieu. How heavy is the air! the vestal lamp
Of the sad moon, weary with vigil, dies
In the still temple of the solemn heaven!
The very darkness lends itself to fear —
To treason —
De Mauprat. And to death!
Richelieu. My omens lied not!
What art thou, wretch?
De Mauprat. Thy doomsman!
Richelieu. Ho, my guards!
Huguet! Montbrassil! Vermont!
De Mauprat. Ay, thy spirits
Forsake thee, wizard; thy bold men of mail
Are *my confederates.* Stir not! but one step,
And know the next — thy grave!
Richelieu. Thou liest, knave!
I am old, infirm — most feeble — but thou liest!
Armand de Richelieu dies not by the hand
Of man — the stars have said it — and the voice
Of my own prophet and oracular soul
Confirms the shining Sibyls! Call them all —
Thy brother butchers! Earth has no such fiend —
No! as one parricide of his father-land,
Who dares in Richelieu murder France!
De Mauprat. Thy stars
Deceive thee, Cardinal; thy soul of wiles
May against kings and armaments avail,
And mock the embattled world; but powerless now
Against the sword of one resolved man,
Upon whose forehead thou hast written shame!
Richelieu. I breathe; — he is not a hireling. Have I wronged thee?
Beware surmise — suspicion — lies! I am
Too great for men to speak the truth of me!
De Mauprat. Thy *acts* are thy accusers, Cardinal.
In his hot youth, a soldier, urged to crime
Against the State, placed in your hands his life; —

You did not strike the blow, — but, o'er his head,
Upon the gossamer thread of your caprice,
Hovered the axe. — His the brave spirit's hell,
The twilight terror of suspense; — your death
Had set him free. — He purposed not, nor prayed it.
One day you summoned — mocked him with smooth pardon —
Showered wealth upon him — bade an Angel's face
Turn earth to paradise —
Richelieu. Well!
De Mauprat. Was this mercy?
A Cæsar's generous vengeance? — Cardinal, no!
Judas, not Cæsar, was the model! You
Saved him from death for shame; reserved to grow
The scorn of living men — to his dead sires
Leprous reproach — scoff of the age to come —
A kind convenience — a Sir Pandarus
To his own bride, and the august adulterer!
Then did the first great law of human hearts,
Which with the patriot's, not the rebel's name
Crowned the first Brutus, when the Tarquin fell,
Make Misery royal — raise this desperate wretch
Into thy destiny! Expect no mercy!
Behold De Mauprat!
(*Lifts his visor.*)
Richelieu. To thy knees, and crawl
For pardon; or, I tell thee, thou shalt live
For such remorse, that, did I hate thee, I
Would bid thee strike, that I might be avenged!
It was to save my Julie from the King,
That in thy valor I forgave thy crime; —
It was, when thou — the rash and ready tool —
Yea of that shame thou loath'st — did'st leave thy hearth
To the polluter — in these arms thy bride
Found the protecting shelter thine withheld.
(*Goes to the side door.*)
Julie de Mauprat — Julie!

(*Enter* Julie.)

Lo, my witness!
De Mauprat. What marvel's this? I dream. My Julie — *thou!*
This, thy beloved hand?
Julie. Henceforth all bond
Between us twain is broken. Were it not
For this old man, I might, in truth, have lost
The right — now mine — to scorn thee!
Richelieu. So, you hear her!
De Mauprat. Thou with some slander hast her sense infected!
Julie. No, Sir; he did excuse thee in despite
Of all that wears the face of truth. Thy *friend* —
Thy *confidant* — familiar — *Baradas* —
Himself revealed thy baseness.
De Mauprat. Baseness!
Richelieu. Ay;
That *thou* didst *court* dishonor.
De Mauprat. Baradas!
Where is thy thunder, Heaven? — Duped! — snared! — undone!
Thou — thou could'st not believe him! Thou dost love me!
Love cannot feed on falsehood!
Julie (*aside*). Love him! Ah!
Be still, my heart! Love you I did: — how fondly,
Woman — if women were my listeners now —
Alone could tell! — For ever fled my dream.
Farewell — all's over!
Richelieu. Nay, my daughter, these
Are but the blinding mists of day-break love
Sprung from its very light, and heralding
A noon of happy summer. — Take her hand
And speak the truth, with which your heart runs over —
That this Count Judas — this Incarnate Falsehood —

Never lied more, than when he told thy Julie
That Adrien loved her not — except, indeed,
When he told Adrien, Julie could betray him.
Julie (*embracing* De Mauprat). You love me, then! you love me! — and they wrong'd you!
De Mauprat. Ah, could'st thou doubt it?
Richelieu. Why, the very mole
Less blind than thou! Baradas loves thy wife; —
Had hoped her hand — aspired to be that cloak
To the King's will, which to thy bluntness seems
The Centaur's poisonous robe — hopes even now
To make thy corpse his footstool to thy bed!
Where was thy wit, man? Ho, these schemes are glass!
The very sun shines through them.
De Mauprat. O, my Lord,
Can you forgive me?
Richelieu. Ay, and save you!
De Mauprat. Save! —
Terrible word! — O, save *thyself;* these halls
Swarm with thy foes; already for thy blood
Pants thirsty murder!
Julie. Murder!
Richelieu. Hush! put by
The woman. Hush! a shriek — a cry — a breath
Too loud, would startle from its horrent pause
The swooping Death! Go to the door, and listen!
Now for escape!
De Mauprat. None, — none! Their blades shall pass
This heart to thine.
Richelieu (*drily*). An honorable outwork,
But much too near the citadel. I think
That I can trust you now (*slowly, and gazing on him*) — yes; I can trust you.
How many of my troop league with you?
De Mauprat. All! —
We *are* your troop!
Richelieu. And Huguet? —
De Mauprat. Is our captain.
Richelieu. A retributive Power! This comes of spies.
All? then the lion's skin too short to-night, —
Now for the fox's! —
Julie. A hoarse gathering murmur! —
Hurrying and heavy footsteps! —
Richelieu. Ha, the posterns?
De Mauprat. No egress where no sentry!
Richelieu. Follow me —
I have it! to my chamber — quick! Come, Julie!
Hush! Mauprat, come!
(*Murmur at a distance, "Death to the Cardinal!"*)
Bloodhounds, I laugh at ye! ha! ha! we will
Baffle them yet! Ha! ha!
(*Exeunt* Julie, Mauprat, Richelieu.)
Huguet (*without*). This way — this way!

Scene III.

(*Enter* Huguet *and the Conspirators.*)

Huguet. De Mauprat's hand is never slow in battle; —
Strange, if it falter now! Ha! gone!
First Conspirator. Perchance
The fox had crept to rest; and to his lair
Death, the dark hunter, tracks him.

(*Enter* Mauprat, *throwing open the doors of the recess, in which a bed, whereon* Richelieu *lies extended.*)

De Mauprat. Live the King!
Richelieu is dead!
Huguet (*advancing towards the recess;* Mauprat *following, his hand on his dagger*). Are his eyes open?
De Mauprat. Ay.
As if in life!
Huguet (*turning back*). I will not look on him.
You have been long.
De Mauprat. I watched him till he slept.

Heed me. No trace of blood reveals the deed; —
Strangled in sleep. His health hath long been broken —
Found breathless in his bed. So runs our tale,
Remember! Back to Paris — Orleans gives
Ten thousand crowns, and Baradas a lordship,
To him who first gluts vengeance with the news
That Richelieu is in Heaven! Quick, that all France
May share your joy.
HUGUET. And you?
DE MAUPRAT. Will stay to crush
Eager suspicion — to forbid sharp eyes
To dwell too closely on the clay; prepare
The rites, and place him on his bier — this *my* task.
I leave to you, Sirs, the more grateful lot
Of wealth and honors. Hence!
HUGUET. I shall be noble!
DE MAUPRAT. Away!
FIRST CONSPIRATOR. Five thousand crowns!
OMNES. To horse! to horse!
(*Exeunt Conspirators.*)

SCENE IV. — *Still night.* — *A room in the house of* COUNT DE BARADAS, *lighted, &c.*

(ORLEANS *and* DE BERINGHEN.)

DE BERINGHEN. I understand. Mauprat kept guard without:
Knows nought of the despatch — but heads the troop
Whom the poor Cardinal fancies his protectors.
Save us from such protection!
ORLEANS. Yet if Huguet,
By whose advice and proffers we renounced
Our earlier scheme, should still be Richelieu's minion,
And play us false —
DE BERINGHEN. The fox must then devour
The geese he gripes, I'm out of it, thank Heaven!
And you must swear you smelt the trick, but seem'd
To approve the deed to render up the doers.

(*Enter* BARADAS.)

BARADAS. Julie is fled — the King, whom now I left
To a most thorny pillow, vows revenge
On her — on Mauprat — and on Richelieu! Well;
We loyal men anticipate his wish
Upon the last — and as for Mauprat —
(*Showing a writ.*)
DE BERINGHEN. Hum!
They say the devil invented printing! Faith,
He has some hand in writing parchment — eh, Count?
What mischief now?
BARADAS. The King at Julie's flight
Enraged will brook no rival in a subject —
So on this old offence — the affair of Faviaux —
Ere Mauprat can tell tales of *us*, we build
His bridge between the dungeon and the grave.
ORLEANS. Well; if our courier can but reach the army,
The cards are ours! and yet I own, I tremble.
Our names are in the scroll — discovery, death!
BARADAS. Success, a crown!
DE BERINGHEN (*apart to* BARADAS). Our future regent is
No hero.
BARADAS (*to* BERINGHEN). But his rank makes others valiant;
And on his cowardice I mount to power.
Were Orleans Regent — what were Baradas?
Oh! by the way — I had forgot, your Highness,
Friend Huguet whisper'd me, "Beware of Marion:
I've seen her lurking near the Cardinal's palace."
Upon that hint — I've found her lodgings elsewhere.
ORLEANS. You wrong her, Count: — Poor Marion! she adores me.

Baradas (*apologetically*). Forgive me, but —

(*Enter Page.*)

Page. My Lord, a rude, strange soldier,
Breathless with haste, demands an audience.
Baradas. So!
The Archers!
Page. In the ante-room, my Lord,
As you desired.
Baradas. 'Tis well, admit the soldier. (*Exit Page.*)
Huguet! I bade him seek me here!

(*Enter* Huguet.)

Huguet. My Lords,
The deed is done. Now Count, fulfil your word,
And make me noble!
Baradas. Richelieu dead? — art sure?
How died he?
Huguet. Strangled in his sleep: — no blood,
No tell-tale violence.
Baradas. Strangled? monstrous villain!
Reward for murder! Ho, there! (*Stamping.*)

(*Enter Captain with five Archers.*)

Huguet. No, thou durst not!
Baradas. Seize on the ruffian — bind him — gag him! Off
To the Bastile!
Huguet. Your word — your plighted faith!
Baradas. Insolent liar! — ho, away!
Huguet. Nay, Count;
I have that about me, which —
Baradas. Away with him!
(*Exeunt* Huguet *and Archers.*)
Now, then, all's safe; Huguet must die in prison,
So Mauprat: — coax or force the meaner crew
To fly the country. Ha, ha! thus, your Highness,
Great men make use of little men.
De Beringhen. My Lords,
Since our suspense is ended — you'll excuse me;
'Tis late — and, *entre nous*, I have not supp'd yet!
I'm one of the new Council now, remember;
I feel the public stirring here already;
A very craving monster. *Au revoir!*
(*Exit* De Beringhen.)
Orleans. No fear, now Richelieu's dead.
Baradas. And could he come
To life again, he could not keep life's life —
His power — nor save De Mauprat from the scaffold, —
Nor Julie from these arms — nor Paris from
The Spaniard — nor your Highness from the throne!
All ours! all ours! in spite of my Lord Cardinal!

(*Enter Page.*)

Page. A gentleman, my Lord, of better mien
Than he who last —
Baradas. Well, he may enter.
(*Exit Page.*)
Orleans. Who
Can this be?
Baradas. One of the conspirators:
Mauprat himself, perhaps.

(*Enter* François.)

François. My Lord —
Baradas. Ha, traitor!
In Paris still?
François. The packet — the despatch —
Some knave play'd spy without, and reft it from me,
Ere I could draw my sword.
Baradas. Play'd spy *without!*
Did he wear armor?
François. Ay, from head to heel.
Orleans. One of our band. Oh, heavens!
Baradas. Could it be Mauprat?
Kept guard at the *door* — knew *naught of the despatch* —
How He? — and yet, who other?
François. Ha, De Mauprat!

The night was dark — his visor closed.
Baradas. 'Twas he!
How could he guess? — 'sdeath! if he should betray us.
His hate to Richelieu dies with Richelieu — and
He was not great enough for treason. Hence!
Find Mauprat — beg, steal, filch, or force it back,
Or, as I live, the halter —
François. By the morrow
I will regain it, (*aside*) and redeem my honor! (*Exit* François.)
Orleans. Oh! we are lost —
Baradas. Not so! But cause on cause
For Mauprat's seizure — silence — death! Take courage.
Orleans. Should it once reach the King, the Cardinal's arm
Could smite us from the grave.
Baradas. Sir, think it not!
I hold De Mauprat in my grasp. To-morrow
And France is ours! Thou dark and fallen Angel,
Whose name on earth's Ambition — thou that mak'st
Thy throne on treasons, stratagems, and murder —
And with thy fierce and blood-red smile canst quench
The guiding stars of solemn empire — hear us —
(For we are thine) — and light us to the goal! (*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV

Third Day

Scene I. — *The Gardens of the Louvre.*

(Orleans, Baradas, De Beringhen, *Courtiers, etc.*)

Orleans. How does my brother bear the Cardinal's death?
Baradas. With grief, when thinking of the toils of State;
With joy, when thinking on the eyes of Julie: —
At times he sighs, "Who now shall govern France?"
Anon exclaims — "Who now shall baffle Louis?"

(*Enter* Louis *and other Courtiers. They uncover.*)

Orleans. Now, my Liege, now, I can embrace a brother.
Louis. Dear Gaston, yes. I do believe you *love* me; —
Richelieu denied it — sever'd us too long.
A great man, Gaston! Who shall govern France?
Baradas. Yourself, my Liege. That swart and potent star
Eclipsed your royal orb. He serv'd the country,
But did he *serve*, or seek to *sway* the *King?*
Louis. You're right — he was an able politician,
That's all. — Between ourselves, Count, I suspect
The largeness of his learning — specially
In falcons — a poor huntsman, too!
Baradas. Ha — ha!
Your Majesty remembers —
Louis. Ay, the blunder
Between the *greffier* and the *souillard* when — (*Checks and crosses himself.*)
Alas! poor sinners that we are! we laugh
While this great man — a priest, a cardinal,
A faithful servant — out upon us!
Baradas. Sire,
If my brow wear no cloud, 'tis that the Cardinal
No longer shades the King.
Louis (*looking up at the skies*). Oh, Baradas!
Am I not to be pitied? — what a day
For —
Baradas. Sorrow? — No, sire!
Louis. Bah! for *hunting*, man,
And Richelieu's dead; 'twould be an indecorum
Till he is buried (*yawns*) — life is very tedious.
I made a madrigal on life last week:
You do not sing, Count? Pity; you should learn.

Poor Richelieu had no ear — yet a great man.
Ah! what a weary weight devolves upon me!
These endless wars — these thankless Parliaments —
The snares in which he tangled States and Kings,
Like the old fisher of the fable, Proteus,
Netting great Neptune's wariest tribes, and changing
Into all shapes when Craft pursued himself:
Oh, a great man!
Baradas. Your royal mother said so,
And died in exile.
Louis (*sadly*). True: I loved my mother!
Baradas. The Cardinal dies. Yet day revives the earth;
The rivers run not back. In truth, my Liege,
Did your high orb on others shine as him,
Why, things as dull in their own selves as I am
Would glow as brightly with the borrowed beam.
Louis. Ahem! He was too stern.
Orleans. A very Nero.
Baradas. His power was like the Capitol of old —
Built on a human skull.
Louis. And, had he lived,
I know another head, my Baradas,
That would have propp'd the pile: I've seen him eye thee
With a most hungry fancy.
Baradas (*anxiously*). Sire, I knew
You would protect me.
Louis. Did you so: of course!
And yet he had a way with him — a something
That always — But no matter, he is dead.
And, after all, men called his King "The Just,"
And so I am. Dear Count, this silliest Julie,
I know not why, she takes my fancy. Many
As fair, and certainly more kind; but yet
It is so. Count, I am no lustful Tarquin,
And do abhor the bold and frontless vices
Which the Church justly censures: yet 'tis sad
On rainy days to drag out weary hours,
Deaf to the music of a woman's voice —
Blind to the sunshine of a woman's eyes.
It is no sin in kings to seek amusement;
And that is all I seek. I miss her much.
She has a silver laugh — a rare perfection.
Baradas. Richelieu was most disloyal in that marriage.
Louis (*querulously*). He knew that Julie pleased me — a clear proof
He never loved me!
Baradas. Oh, most clear! — But now
No bar between the lady and your will!
This writ makes all secure: a week or two
In the Bastile will sober Mauprat's love,
And leave him eager to dissolve a hymen
That brings him such a home.
Louis. See to it, Count;
(*Exit* Baradas.)
I'll summon Julie back. A word with you.
(*Takes aside* First Courtier *and* De Beringhen, *and passes, conversing with them, through the gardens.*)

(*Enter* François.)

François. All search, as yet, in vain for Mauprat! Not
At home since yesternoon — a soldier told me
He saw him pass this way with hasty strides;
Should he meet Baradas — they'd rend it from him —
And then — benignant Fortune smiles upon me —
I am thy son! — if thou desert'st me now,
Come Death and snatch me from disgrace. But, no,
There's a great Spirit ever in the air
That from prolific and far-spreading wings
Scatters the seeds of honor — yea, the walls
And moats of castle forts — the barren seas —

The cell wherein the pale-eyed student holds
Talk with melodious science — all are sown
With everlasting honors, if our souls
Will toil for fame as boors for bread —

(*Enter* Mauprat.)

Mauprat. Oh, let me —
Let me but meet him foot to foot — I'll dig
The Judas from his heart; — albeit the King
Should o'er him cast the purple!
François. Mauprat! hold: —
Where is the —
Mauprat. Well! What would'st thou?
François. The despatch!
The packet. — Look on me — I serve the Cardinal —
You know me. Did you not keep guard last night
By Marion's house?
Mauprat. I did: — no matter now! —
They told me, *he* was *here!* —
François. O joy! quick — quick —
The packet thou didst wrest from me?
Mauprat. The packet? —
What, art thou he I deem'd the Cardinal's spy
(Dupe that I was) — and overhearing Marion —
François. The same — restore it! haste!
Mauprat. I have it not:
Methought it but reveal'd our scheme to Richelieu,
And, as we mounted, gave it to —

(*Enter* Baradas.)

Stand back!
Now, villain! now — I have thee!
(*To* François) — Hence, Sir, *Draw!*
François. Art mad? — the King's at hand! leave *him* to Richelieu!
Speak — the despatch — to whom —
Mauprat (*dashing him aside, and rushing to* Baradas). Thou triple slanderer!
I'll set my heel upon thy crest!
(*A few passes.*)
François. Fly — fly!
The King! —

(*Enter at one side* Louis, Orleans, De Beringhen, *Courtiers, etc. At the other, the Guards hastily.*)

Louis. Swords drawn — before our very palace!
Have our laws died with Richelieu?
Baradas. Pardon, Sire, —
My crime but self-defence. (*Aside to* King.) It is De Mauprat!
Louis. Dare he thus brave us?
(Baradas *goes to the Guard, and gives the writ.*)
Mauprat. Sire, in the Cardinal's name —
Baradas. Seize him — disarm — to the Bastile!
(De Mauprat *seized, struggles with the Guard.* — François *restlessly endeavoring to pacify and speak to him — when the gates open.*)

(*Enter* Richelieu *and* Joseph, *followed by arquebusiers.*)

Baradas. The Dead
Return'd to life!
Louis. What a *mock* death! this tops
The Infinite of Insult.
Mauprat (*breaking from Guards*). Priest and Hero!
For you are both — protect the truth! —
Richelieu. What's this?
(*Taking the writ from the Guard.*)
De Beringhen. Fact in Philosophy. Foxes have got
Nine lives as well as cats!
Baradas. Be firm, my Liege.
Louis. I have assumed the sceptre — I will wield it!
Joseph. The tide runs counter — there'll be shipwreck somewhere.
(Baradas *and* Orleans *keep close to the* King — *whispering and prompting him when* Richelieu *speaks.*)
Richelieu. High treason. — Faviaux! still that stale pretence!
My Liege, bad men (ay, Count, most *knavish* men!)

Abuse your royal goodness. For this soldier,
France hath none braver, and his youth's hot folly,
Misled — (by whom *your Highness* may conjecture!) —
Is long since cancell'd by a loyal manhood.
I, Sire, have pardoned him.
Louis. And we do give
Your pardon to the winds. Sir, do your duty!
Richelieu. What, Sire? you do not know — Oh, pardon me —
You know not yet, that this brave, honest heart
Stood between mine and murder! — Sire, for my sake —
For your old servant's sake — undo this wrong.
See, let me rend the sentence.
Louis. At your peril!
This is too much: — Again, Sir, do your duty!
Richelieu. Speak not, but go: — I would not see young Valor
So humbled as grey Service!
De Mauprat. Fare you well!
Save Julie and console her.
François (*aside to* Mauprat). The despatch!
Your fate, foes, life, hang on a word! to whom?
De Mauprat. To Huguet.
François. Hush! — keep council! silence — hope!
(*Exeunt* Mauprat *and Guard.*)
Baradas (*aside to* François). Has he the packet?
François. He will not reveal —
(*Aside.*) Work, brain! beat, heart!
"*There's no such word as fail.*"
(*Exit* François.)
Richelieu (*fiercely*). Room, my Lords, room! — the Minister of France
Can need no intercession with the King.
(*They fall back.*)
Louis. What means this false report of death, Lord Cardinal?
Richelieu. Are you then anger'd, Sire, that I live still?
Louis. No; but such artifice —
Richelieu. Not mine: — look elsewhere!
Louis — my castle swarm'd with the assassins.
Baradas (*advancing*). We have punish'd them already.
Huguet now
In the Bastile. Oh! my Lord, *we* were prompt
To avenge you, *we* were.
Richelieu. *We?* Ha! ha! you hear,
My Liege! What page, man, in the last court grammar
Made you a plural? Count, you have seized the *hireling:* —
Sire, shall I name the *master?*
Louis. Tush! my Lord,
The old contrivance: — ever does your wit
Invent assassins, — that ambition may
Slay rivals —
Richelieu. Rivals, Sire! in what?
Service to France? *I have none!* Lives the man
Whom Europe, paled before your glory, deems
Rival to Armand Richelieu?
Louis. What so haughty!
Remember, he who made, can unmake.
Richelieu. Never!
Never! Your anger can recall your trust,
Annul my office, spoil me of my lands,
Rifle my coffers, — but my name — my deeds,
Are royal in a land beyond your sceptre!
Pass sentence on me, if you will; from kings,
Lo, I appeal to Time! "Be just, my liege —
"I found your kingdom rent with heresies
"And bristling with rebellion; lawless nobles
"And breadless serfs; England fomenting discord;
"Austria — her clutch on your dominion; Spain
"Forging the prodigal gold of either Ind
"To armed thunderbolts. The Arts lay dead,
"Trade rotted in your marts, your Armies mutinous,

"Your Treasury bankrupt. Would you now revoke
"Your trust, so be it! and I leave you, sole
"Supremest Monarch of the mightiest realm
"From Ganges to the Icebergs: — Look without,
"No foe not humbled! Look within; the Arts
"Quit for your schools — their old Hesperides
"The golden Italy! while through the veins
"Of your vast empire flows in strengthening tides
"TRADE, the calm health of nations!
Sire, I know
"Your smoother courtiers please you best — nor measure
"Myself with them — yet sometimes I would doubt
"If Statesmen rock'd and dandled into power
"Could leave such legacies to kings!"
(Louis *appears irresolute.*)

Baradas (*passing him, whispers*). But Julie,
Shall I not summon her to Court?

Louis (*motions to* Baradas *and turns haughtily to the* Cardinal).
Enough!
Your Eminence must excuse a longer audience.
To your own palace: — For our conference, this
Nor place — nor season.

Richelieu. Good my Liege, for *Justice*
All place a temple, and all season, summer!
Do you deny me justice? Saints of Heaven!
He turns from me! *Do you deny me justice?*
For fifteen years, while in these hands dwelt Empire,
The humblest craftsman — the obscurest vassal —
The very leper shrinking from the sun,
Tho' loathed by Charity, might ask for justice! —
Not with the fawning tone and crawling mien
Of some I see around you — Counts and Princes —
Kneeling for *favors;* but, erect and loud,
As men who ask man's rights! my Liege, my Louis,
Do you refuse me justice — audience even —
In the pale presence of the baffled Murther?

Louis. Lord Cardinal — one by one you have sever'd from me
The bonds of human love. All near and dear
Mark'd out for vengeance — exile or the scaffold.
You find me now amidst my trustiest friends,
My closest kindred; — you would tear them from me;
They murder *you* forsooth, since *me* they love.
Eno' of plots and treasons for one reign!
Home! Home! And sleep away these phantoms!

Richelieu. Sire!
I — patience, Heaven! sweet Heaven! — Sire, from the foot
Of that Great Throne, these hands have raised aloft
On an Olympus, looking down on mortals
And worshipp'd by their awe — before the foot
Of that high throne — spurn you the grey-hair'd man,
Who gave you empire — and now sues for safety?

Louis. No: — when we see your Eminence in truth
At the *foot* of the throne — we'll listen to you. (*Exit* Louis.)

Orleans. Saved!

Baradas. For this deep thanks to Julie and to Mauprat.

Richelieu. My Lord de Baradas, I pray your pardon —
You are to be my successor! your hand, Sir!

Baradas (*aside*). What can this mean?

Richelieu. It trembles, see! it trembles!
The hand that holds the destinies of nations

Ought to shake less! poor Baradas! poor France!
Baradas. Insolent — (*Exeunt.*)

Scene II.

Richelieu. Joseph — Did you hear the King?
Joseph. I did, — there's danger! Had you been less haughty —
Richelieu. And suffer'd slaves to chuckle — "see the Cardinal —
How meek his Eminence is to-day" — I tell thee
This is a strife in which the loftiest look
Is the most subtle armor —
Joseph. But —
Richelieu. No time
For ifs and buts. I will accuse these traitors!
François shall witness that De Baradas
Gave him the secret missive for De Bouillon,
And told him life and death were in the scroll.
I will — I will —
Joseph. Tush! François is your creature,
So they will say and laugh at you! — *your witness*
Must be that same Despatch.
Richelieu. Away to Marion!
Joseph. I have been there — she is seized — removed — imprisoned —
By the Count's orders.
Richelieu. Goddess of bright dreams,
My Country — shalt thou lose me now, when most
Thou need'st thy worshipper? My native land!
Let me but ward this dagger from thy heart,
And die — but on thy bosom.

(*Enter* Julie.)

Julie. Heaven! I thank thee!
It cannot be, or this all-powerful man
Would not stand idly thus.
Richelieu. What dost *thou* here? Home!
Julie. Home! is *Adrien there?* — you're dumb — yet strive
For words; I see them trembling on your lip,
But choked by pity. It *was* truth — all truth!
Seized — the Bastile — and in your presence too!
Cardinal, where is Adrien? Think — he saved
Your life: — your name is infamy, if wrong
Should come to his!
Richelieu. Be sooth'd, child.
Julie. Child no more;
I love, and I am woman! Hope and suffer —
Love, suffering, hope, — what else does make the strength
And majesty of woman? Where is Adrien?
Richelieu (*to* Joseph). Your youth was never young — you never loved;
Speak to her —
Joseph. Nay, take heed — the King's command,
'Tis true — I mean — the —
Julie (*to* Richelieu). Let thine eyes meet mine;
Answer me but one word — I am a wife —
I ask thee for my *home* — my Fate — my All!
Where is my *husband?*
Richelieu. You are Richelieu's ward,
A soldier's bride: they who insist on truth
Must out-face fear; you ask me for your husband!
There — where the clouds of heaven look darkest, o'er
The domes of the Bastile!
Julie. I thank you, father,
You see I do not shudder. Heaven forgive you
The sin of this desertion!
Richelieu (*detaining her*). Whither would'st thou?
Julie. Stay me not. Fie; I should be there already.
I am thy ward, and haply he may think
Thou'st taught *me* also to forsake the wretched!
Richelieu. I've fill'd those cells — with many — traitors all.
Had *they* wives too? Thy memories, Power, are solemn!

Poor sufferer! think'st thou that yon gates of woe
Unbar to love? Alas! if love once enter,
'Tis for the last farewell; between those walls
And the mute grave — the blessed household sounds
Only heard once — while hungering at the door,
The headsman whets the axe.

Julie. O, mercy, mercy!
Save him, restore him, father! Art thou not
The Cardinal-King? — the Lord of life and death —
Beneath whose light as deeps beneath the moon,
The solemn tides of Empire ebb and flow? —
Art thou not Richelieu?

Richelieu. Yesterday I was! —
To-day a very weak old man! To-morrow,
I know not what!

Julie. Do you conceive his meaning?
Alas! I cannot. But, methinks, my senses
Are duller than they were!

Joseph. The King is chafed
Against his servant. Lady, while we speak,
The lackey of the ante-room is not
More powerless than the Minister of France.

"Richelieu. And yet the air is still; Heaven wears no cloud;
"From Nature's silent orbit starts no portent
"To warn the unconscious world; albeit, this night
"May with a morrow teem which, in my fall,
"Would carry earthquake to remotest lands,
"And change the Christian globe. What would'st thou, woman?
"Thy fate and his, with mine, for good or ill,
"Are woven threads. In my vast sum of life,
"Millions such units merge."

(*Enter* First Courtier.)

First Courtier. Madame de Mauprat!
Pardon, your Eminence — even now I seek
This lady's home — commanded by the King
To pray her presence.

Julie (*clinging to* Richelieu). Think of my dead father! —
Think, how, an infant, clinging to your knees,
And looking to your eyes, the wrinkled care
Fled from your brow before the smile of childhood,
Fresh from the dews of heaven! Think of this,
And take me to your breast.

Richelieu. To those who sent you! —
And say, you found the virtue they would slay
Here — couch'd upon this heart, as at an altar,
And sheltered by the wings of sacred Rome!
Be gone!

First Courtier. My Lord, I am your friend and servant —
Misjudge me not; but never yet was Louis
So roused against you: — shall I take this answer? —
It were to be your foe.

Richelieu. All time my foe
If I a Priest could cast this holy Sorrow
Forth from her last Asylum!

First Courtier. He is lost!
(*Exit.*)

Richelieu. God help thee, child! — she hears not! Look upon her!
The storm that rends the oak, uproots the flower.
Her father loved me so! and in that age
When friends are brothers! She has been to me
Soother, nurse, plaything, daughter. Are these tears?
Oh! shame, shame! — dotage!

Joseph. Tears are not for eyes
That rather need the lightning, which can pierce

Through barred gates and triple walls, to smite
Crime, where it cowers in secret! The Despatch!
Set every spy to work; the morrow's sun
Must see that written treason in your hands,
Or rise upon your ruin.
Richelieu. Ay — and close
Upon my corpse! I am not made to live —
Friends, glory, France, all reft from me; — my star
Like some vain holiday mimicry of fire,
Piercing imperial heaven, and falling down
Rayless and blacken'd to the dust — a thing
For all men's feet to trample! Yea! to-morrow
Triumph or death! Look up, child! — Lead us, Joseph.
(*As they are going out.*)

(*Enter* Baradas *and* De Beringhen.)

Baradas. My Lord, the King cannot believe your Eminence
So far forgets your duty, and his greatness,
As to resist his mandate! Pray you, Madam,
Obey the King — no cause for fear!
Julie. My father!
Richelieu. She shall not stir!
Baradas. You are not of her kindred —
An orphan —
Richelieu. And her country is her mother!
Baradas. The country is the King!
Richelieu. Ay, is it so?
Then wakes the power which in the age of iron
Burst forth to curb the great, and raise the low.
Mark, where she stands, around her form I draw
The awful circle of our solemn Church!
Set but a foot within that holy ground,
And on thy head — yea, though it wore a crown —
I launch the curse of Rome!
Baradas. I dare not brave you!
I do but speak the orders of my King.
The Church, your rank, power, very word, my Lord,
Suffice you for resistance: — blame yourself,
If it should cost you power!
Richelieu. That *my* stake. Ah!
Dark gamester! *what is thine?* Look to it well! —
Lose not a trick. By this same hour to-morrow
Thou shalt have France, or I thy head!
Baradas (*aside to* De Beringhen). He cannot
Have the despatch?
De Beringhen. No: were it so, your stake
Were lost already.
Joseph (*aside*). Patience is your game:
Reflect you have not the Despatch!
Richelieu. O! monk!
Leave patience to the saints — for *I* am human!
Did not thy father die for France, poor orphan?
And now they say thou hast *no* father! Fie!
Art thou not pure and good? if so, thou art
A part of that —— the Beautiful, the Sacred ——
Which in all climes, men that have hearts adore,
By the great title of their mother country!
Baradas (*aside*). He wanders!
Richelieu. So cling close unto my breast,
Here where thou droop'st — lies France! I am very feeble —
Of little use it seems to either now.
Well, well — we will go home.
Baradas. In sooth, my Lord,
You do need rest — the burthens of the State
O'ertask your health!
Richelieu (*to* Joseph). I'm patient, see?
Baradas (*aside*). His mind
And life are breaking fast!
Richelieu (*overhearing him*). Irreverent ribald!
If so, beware the falling ruins! Hark!
I tell thee, scorner of these whitening hairs,

When this snow melteth there shall come a flood!
Avaunt! my name is Richelieu — I defy thee!
Walk blindfold on; behind thee stalks the headsman.
Ha! ha! — how pale he is! Heaven save my country!
(*Falls back in* JOSEPH's *arms.*)
(*Exit* BARADAS *followed by* DE BERINGHEN, *betraying his exultation by his gestures.*)

ACT V

FOURTH DAY

SCENE I. — *The Bastile — a corridor — in the background the door of one of the condemned cells.*

(*Enter* JOSEPH *and* GAOLER.)

GAOLER. Stay, father, I will call the governor.
(*Exit* GAOLER.)
JOSEPH. He has it, then — this Huguet; — so we learn
From François; — Hump! Now if I can but gain
One moment's access, all is ours! The Cardinal
Trembles 'tween life and death. His life is power: —
Smite one — slay both! No Æsculapian drugs,
By learned quacks baptised with Latin jargon,
E'er bore the healing which that scrap of parchment
Will medicine to Ambition's flagging heart.
France shall be saved — and Joseph be a bishop!

(*Enter* GOVERNOR *and* GAOLER.)

GOVERNOR. Father, you wish to see the prisoners Huguet
And the young knight De Mauprat?
JOSEPH. So my office,
And the Lord Cardinal's order warrant, son!
GOVERNOR. Father, it cannot be: Count Baradas
Has summon'd to the Louvre Sieur De Mauprat.
JOSEPH. Well, well! But Huguet —
GOVERNOR. Dies at noon.
JOSEPH. At noon!
No moment to delay the pious rites
Which fit the soul for death — quick, quick — admit me!
GOVERNOR. You cannot enter, monk! Such are my orders!
JOSEPH. Orders! vain man! — the Cardinal still is minister.
His orders crush all others!
GOVERNOR (*lifting his hat*). Save his King's!
See, monk, the royal sign and seal affix'd
To the Count's mandate. None may have access
To either prisoner, Huguet or De Mauprat,
Not even a priest, without the special passport
Of Count de Baradas. I'll hear no more!
JOSEPH. Just Heaven! and are we baffled thus! — Despair!!
Think on the Cardinal's power — beware his anger.
GOVERNOR. I'll not be menaced, Priest! Besides, the Cardinal
Is dying and disgraced — all Paris knows it.
You hear the prisoner's knell. (*Bell tolls.*)
JOSEPH. I do beseech you —
The Cardinal is *not* dying — But one moment,
And — hist! — five thousand pistoles! —
GOVERNOR. How! a bribe,
And to a soldier, grey with years of honor?
Begone! —
JOSEPH. Ten thousand — twenty! —
GOVERNOR. Gaoler — put
This monk without our walls.
JOSEPH. By those grey hairs,
Yea, by this badge (*touching the cross of St. Louis worn by the* GOVERNOR) — the guerdon of your valor —
By all your toils, hard days and sleepless nights —
Borne in your country's service, noble son —
Let me but see the prisoner! —
GOVERNOR. No! —
JOSEPH. He hath

Secrets of state — papers in which —
GOVERNOR (*interrupting*). I know,
Such was his message to Count Baradas.
Doubtless the Count will see to it.
JOSEPH. The Count!
Then not a hope! — You shall —
GOVERNOR. Betray my trust!
Never — not one word more — you heard me, gaoler?
JOSEPH. What can be done? — distraction! — Richelieu yet
Must — what? — I know not — thought, nerve, strength, forsake me.
Dare you refuse the Church her holiest rights?
GOVERNOR. I refuse nothing — I obey my orders —
JOSEPH. And sell your country to her parricides!
Oh, tremble yet! — Richelieu —
GOVERNOR. Begone!
JOSEPH. Undone! (*Exit* JOSEPH.)
GOVERNOR. A most audacious shaveling, interdicted
Above all others by the Count —
GAOLER. I hope, Sir,
I shall not lose my perquisites. The Sieur
De Mauprat will not be reprieved?
GOVERNOR. Oh, fear not.
The Count's commands by him who came for Mauprat
Are to prepare headsman and axe by noon;
The Count will give you perquisites enough;
Two deaths in one day!
GAOLER. Sir, may Heaven reward him!
Oh, by the way, that troublesome young fellow,
Who calls himself the prisoner Huguet's son,
Is here again — implores, weeps, raves, to see him.
GOVERNOR. Poor youth, I pity him!

(*Enter* DE BERINGHEN, *followed by* FRANÇOIS.)

DE BERINGHEN (*to* FRANÇOIS). Now, prithee, friend,
Let go my cloak; you really discompose me.
FRANÇOIS. No, they will drive me hence; my father! Oh!
Let me but see him once — but once — one moment!
DE BERINGHEN (*to* GOVERNOR). Your servant, Messire, — this poor rascal, Huguet,
Has sent to see the Count de Baradas
Upon state secrets, that afflict his conscience.
The Count can't leave his Majesty an instant:
I am his proxy.
GOVERNOR. The Count's word is law!
Again, young scapegrace! How com'st thou admitted?
DE BERINGHEN. Oh, a most filial fellow: Huguet's son!
I found him whimpering in the court below.
I pray his leave to say good-bye to father,
Before that very long unpleasant journey
Father's about to take. Let him wait here
Till I return.
FRANÇOIS. No; take me with you.
DE BERINGHEN. Nay;
After *me*, friend — the Public first!
GOVERNOR. The Count's
Commands are strict. No one must visit Huguet
Without his passport.
DE BERINGHEN. Here it is! Pshaw! nonsense!
I'll be your surety. See, my Cerberus,
He is no Hercules!
GOVERNOR. Well, you're responsible.
Stand there, friend. If, when you come out, my Lord,
The youth slip in, 'tis *your* fault.
DE BERINGHEN. So it is!
(*Exit through the door of the cell, followed by the* GAOLER.)
GOVERNOR. Be calm, my lad. Don't fret so. I had once
A father too! I'll not be hard upon you,
And so stand close. I must not see you enter:
You understand. Between this innocent youth
And that intriguing monk there is, in truth,
A wide distinction.

(*Re-enter* Gaoler.)

Come, we'll go our rounds;
I'll give you just one quarter of an hour;
And if my Lord leave first, make my excuse.
Yet stay, the gallery's long and dark; no sentry
Until he reach the grate below. He'd best
Wait till I come. If he should lose the way,
We may not be in call.
François. I'll tell him, Sir —
(*Exeunt* Governor *and* Gaoler.)
He's a wise son that knoweth his own father.
I've forged a precious one! So far, so well!
Alas, what then? this wretch has sent to Baradas —
Will sell the scroll to ransom life. Oh, Heaven!
On what a thread hangs hope! (*Listens at the door.*) Loud words — a cry!
(*Looks through the key-hole.*)
They struggle! Ho! — the packet!!! (*Tries to open the door.*) Lost! He has it —
The courtier has it — Huguet, spite his chains,
Grapples! — well done! Now — now! (*Draws back.*) The gallery's long!
And this is left us!
(*Drawing his dagger, and standing behind the door.*)

(*Re-enter* De Beringhen, *with the packet.*)

Victory! Yield it, robber —
Yield it — or die — (*A short struggle.*)
De Beringhen. Off! ho! — there!
François (*grappling with him*). Death or honor! (*Exeunt struggling.*)

Scene II. — *The* King's *closet at the Louvre. A suite of rooms in perspective at one side.*

(Baradas *and* Orleans.)

Baradas. All smiles! the Cardinal's swoon of yesterday
Heralds his death to-day; could he survive,
It would not be as minister — so great
The King's resentment at the priest's defiance.
All smiles! and yet, should this accurs'd De Mauprat
Have given our packet to another. — 'Sdeath!
I dare not think of it!
Orleans. You've sent to search him?
Baradas. Sent, Sir, to search? — that hireling hands may find
Upon him, naked, with its broken seal,
That scroll, whose every word is death! No — no —
These hands alone must clutch that awful secret.
I dare not leave the palace, night or day,
While Richelieu lives — his minions — creatures — spies —
Not one must reach the King!
Orleans. What hast thou done?
Baradas. Summon'd De Mauprat hither!
Orleans. Could this Huguet,
Who pray'd thy presence with so fierce a fervor,
Have thieved the scroll?
Baradas. Huguet was housed with us,
The very moment we dismiss'd the courier.
It cannot be! a stale trick for reprieve.
But, to make sure, I've sent our trustiest friend
To see and sift him — Hist! here comes the King.
How fare you, Sire?

(*Enter* Louis.)

Louis. In the same mind, I have
Decided! yes, he would forbid your presence,
My brother, — your's, my friend, then Julie, too;
Thwarts — braves — defies — (*suddenly turning to* Baradas) We make you minister.
Gaston, for you — the baton of our armies.
You love me, do you not?
Orleans. Oh, love you, Sire?
(*Aside.*) Never so much as now.
Baradas. May I deserve

Your trust (*aside*) — until you sign your abdication!
My Liege, but one way left to daunt De Mauprat,
And Julie to divorce. — We must prepare
The death-writ; what, tho' sign'd and seal'd? we can
Withhold the enforcement.
Louis. Ah, you may prepare it;
We need not urge it to effect.
Baradas. Exactly!
No haste, my liege. (*Looking at his watch and aside.*) He may live one hour longer.

(*Enter Courtier.*)

Courtier. The Lady Julie, Sire, implores an audience.
Louis. Aha! repentant of her folly! — Well,
Admit her.
Baradas. Sire, she comes for Mauprat's pardon,
And the conditions —
Louis. You are minister,
We leave to you our answer.

(*As* Julie *enters,* — *the Captain of the Archers, by another door — and whispers* Baradas.)

Captain. The Chevalier
De Mauprat waits below.
Baradas (*aside*). Now the despatch!
(*Exit with Officer.*)

(*Enter* Julie.)

Julie. My Liege, you sent for me. I come where Grief
Should come when guiltless, while the name of King
Is holy on the earth! — Here, at the feet
Of Power, I kneel for mercy.
Louis. Mercy, Julie,
Is an affair of state. The Cardinal should
In this be your interpreter.
Julie. Alas!
I know not if that mighty spirit now
Stoop to the things of earth. Nay, while I speak,
Perchance he hears the orphan by the throne
Where kings themselves need pardor; O, my Liege,
Be father to the fatherless; in you
Dwells my last hope!

(*Enter* Baradas.)

Baradas (*aside*). He has not the despatch;
Smiled, while we search'd, and braves me. — Oh!
Louis (*gently*). What would'st thou?
Julie. A single life. — You reign o'er millions. — What
Is *one man's* life to you? — and yet to *me*
'Tis France, — 'tis earth, — 'tis everything! — a life —
A human life — my husband's.
Louis (*aside*). Speak to her,
I am not marble, — give her hope — or —
Baradas. Madam,
Vex not your King, whose heart, too soft for justice,
Leaves to his ministers that solemn charge.
(Louis *walks up the stage.*)
Julie. You *were* his friend.
Baradas. I *was* before I loved thee.
Julie. Loved me!
Baradas. Hush, Julie: could'st thou misinterpret
My acts, thoughts, motives, nay, my very words,
Here — in this palace?
Julie. Now I know I'm mad,
Even that memory fail'd me.
Baradas. I am young,
Well-born and brave as Mauprat: — for thy sake
I peril what he has not — fortune — power;
All to great souls most dazzling. I alone
Can save thee from yon tyrant, now my puppet!
Be mine; annul the mockery of this marriage,
And on the day I clasp thee to my breast
De Mauprat shall be free.
Julie. Thou durst not speak
Thus in *his* ear (*pointing to* Louis). Thou double traitor! — tremble.
I will unmask thee.
Baradas. I will say thou ravest
And see this scroll! its letters shall be blood!

Go to the King, count with me word for word;
And while you pray the life — I write the sentence!
Julie. Stay, stay. (*Rushing to the* King.) You have a kind and princely heart,
Tho' sometimes it is silent: you were born
To *power* — it has not flushed you into madness,
As it doth meaner men. Banish my husband —
Dissolve our marriage — cast me to the grave
Of human ties, where hearts congeal to ice,
In the dark convent's everlasting winter —
(Surely eno' for justice — hate — revenge —)
But spare this life, thus lonely, scathed, and bloomless;
And when thou stand'st for judgment on thine own,
The deed shall shine beside thee as an angel.
Louis (*much affected*). Go, go, to Baradas: and annul thy marriage,
And —
Julie (*anxiously, and watching his countenance*). Be his bride!
Louis. A form, a mere decorum.
Thou know'st I love thee.
Julie. O thou sea of shame,
And not one star.
(*The* King *goes up the stage and passes through the suite of rooms at the side in evident emotion.*)
Baradas. Well, thy election, Julie;
This hand — his grave!
Julie. His grave! and I —
Baradas. Can save him.
Swear to be mine.
Julie. That were a bitterer death!
Avaunt, thou tempter! I did ask his life
A boon, and not the barter of dishonor.
The heart can break, and scorn you: wreak your malice;
Adrien and I will leave you this sad earth,
And pass together hand in hand to Heaven!
Baradas. You have decided. (*Withdraws to the side scene for a moment, and returns.*) Listen to me, Lady;
I am no base intriguer. I adored thee
From the first glance of those inspiring eyes;
With thee entwined ambition, hope, the future.
I will not lose thee! I can place thee nearest —
Ay, to the throne — nay, on the throne, perchance;
My star is at its zenith. Look upon me;
Hast thou decided?
Julie. No, no; you can see
How weak I am, be human, Sir — one moment.
Baradas (*stamping his foot.* De Mauprat *appears at the side of the stage guarded*). Behold thy husband! — Shall he pass to death,
And know thou could'st have saved him?
Julie. Adrien, speak!
But say you wish to *live!* — if not your wife,
Your slave, — do with me as you will!
De Mauprat. Once more! —
Why, this is mercy, Count! Oh, think, my Julie,
Life, at the best, is short, — but love immortal!
Baradas (*taking* Julie's *hand*). Ah, loveliest —
Julie. Go, that touch has made me iron.
We have decided — death!
Baradas (*to* De Mauprat). Now, say to whom
Thou gavest the packet, and thou yet shalt live.
De Mauprat. I'll tell thee nothing!
Baradas. Hark, — the rack!
De Mauprat. Thy penance
For ever, wretch! — What rack is like the conscience?
Julie. I shall be with thee soon.
Baradas (*giving the writ to the Officer*). Hence, to the headsman.
(*The doors are thrown open. The* Hussier *announces "His Eminence the Cardinal Duke de Richelieu."*)

(*Enter* Richelieu, *attended by Gentlemen, Pages, etc., pale, feeble, and leaning on* Joseph, *followed by three* Secretaries of State, *attended by three* Sub-secretaries *with papers, etc.*)

Julie (*rushing to* Richelieu). You live — you live — and Adrien shall not die!
Richelieu. Not if an old man's prayers, himself near death,
Can aught avail thee, daughter! Count, you now
Hold what I held on earth: — one boon, my Lord,
This soldier's life.
Baradas. The stake — my head! — you said it.
I cannot lose one trick. Remove your prisoner.
Julie. No! — No! —

(*Enter* Louis *from the rooms beyond.*)

Richelieu (*to Officer*). Stay, Sir, one moment. My good Liege,
Your worn-out servant, willing, Sire, to spare you
Some pain of conscience, would forestall your wishes.
I do resign my office.
De Mauprat. You?
Julie. All's over!
Richelieu. My end draws near. These sad ones, Sire, I love them,
I do not ask his life; but suffer justice
To halt, until I can dismiss his soul,
Charged with an old man's blessing.
Louis. Surely!
Baradas. Sire —
Louis. Silence — small favor to a dying servant.
Richelieu. You would consign your armies to the baton
Of your most honor'd brother. Sire, so be it!
Your minister, the Count de Baradas;
A most sagacious choice! — Your Secretaries
Of State attend me, Sire, to render up
The ledgers of a realm. — I do beseech you,
Suffer these noble gentlemen to learn
The nature of the glorious task that waits them,
Here, in my presence.
Louis. You say well, my Lord.
(*To* Secretaries *as he seats himself.*) Approach, Sirs.
Richelieu. I — I — faint! — air — air — (Joseph *and a Gentleman assist him to a sofa, placed beneath a window.*) I thank you —
Draw near, my children.
Baradas. He's too weak to question,
Nay, scarce to speak; all's safe.

Scene III.

(*Manent* Richelieu, Mauprat, *and* Julie, *the last kneeling beside the* Cardinal; *the Officer of the Guard behind* Mauprat. Joseph *near* Richelieu, *watching the* King. Louis. Baradas *at the back of the* King's *chair, anxious and disturbed.* Orleans *at a greater distance, careless and triumphant. The* Secretaries. *As each* Secretary *advances in his turn, he takes the portfolios from the* Sub-secretaries.)

First Secretary. The affairs of Portugal,
Most urgent, Sire — One short month since the Duke
Braganza was a rebel.
Louis. And is still!
First Secretary. No, Sire, *he has succeeded!* He is now
Crown'd King of Portugal — craves instant succor
Against the arms of Spain.
Louis. We will not grant it
Against his lawful King. Eh, Count?
Baradas. No, Sire.
First Secretary. But Spain's your deadliest foe; whatever
Can weaken Spain must strengthen France. The Cardinal
Would send the succors; — (*solemnly*) — balance, Sire, of Europe!
Louis. The Cardinal! — balance! — We'll consider — Eh, Count?
Baradas. Yes, Sire; — fall back.
First Secretary. But —
Baradas. Oh, fall back, Sir!

JOSEPH. Humph!
SECOND SECRETARY. The affairs of England, Sire, most urgent; Charles
The First has lost a battle that decides
One half his realm — craves moneys, Sire, and succor.
LOUIS. He shall have both. — Eh, Baradas?
BARADAS. Yes, Sire.
(Oh, that despatch! — my veins are fire!)
RICHELIEU (*feebly, but with great distinctness*). My Liege —
Forgive me — Charles' cause is lost. A man,
Named Cromwell, risen, — a great man! — your succor
Would fail — your loans be squander'd! Pause — reflect.
LOUIS. Reflect — Eh, Baradas?
BARADAS. Reflect, Sire.
JOSEPH. Humph!
LOUIS (*aside*). I half repent! No successor to Richelieu!
Round me thrones totter! dynasties dissolve!
The soil he guards alone escapes the earthquake!
JOSEPH. Our star not yet eclipsed! — you mark the King?
Oh! had we the despatch!
RICHELIEU. Ah! Joseph! Child —
Would I could help thee.

(*Enter Gentleman, whispers* JOSEPH, *they exeunt hastily.*)

BARADAS (*to* SECRETARY). Sir, fall back!
SECOND SECRETARY. But —
BARADAS. Pshaw, Sir!
THIRD SECRETARY (*mysteriously*). The *secret correspondence*, Sire, most urgent —
Accounts of spies — deserters — heretics —
Assassins — poisoners — schemes against yourself!
LOUIS. *Myself!* — most urgent!
(*Looking on the documents.*)

(*Re-enter* JOSEPH *with* FRANÇOIS, *whose pourpoint is streaked with blood.* FRANÇOIS *passes behind the* CARDINAL'S *attendants, and, sheltered by them from the sight of* BARADAS, *etc., falls at* RICHELIEU'S *feet.*)

FRANÇOIS. O! my Lord!
RICHELIEU. Thou art bleeding!
FRANÇOIS. A scratch — I have not fail'd! (*Gives the packet.*)
RICHELIEU. Hush!
(*Looking at the contents.*)
THIRD SECRETARY (*to* KING). Sire, the Spaniards
Have reinforced their army on the frontiers.
The Duc de Bouillon —
RICHELIEU. Hold! In this department —
A paper — here, Sire — read yourself — then take
The Count's advice in't.

(*Enter* DE BERINGHEN *hastily, and draws aside* BARADAS.)

(RICHELIEU, *to* SECRETARY, *giving an open parchment.*)

BARADAS (*bursting from* DE BERINGHEN). What! and reft it from thee!
Ha! — hold!
JOSEPH. Fall back, son, — it is your turn now!
BARADAS. Death! — the Despatch!
LOUIS (*reading*). To Bouillon — and sign'd Orleans! —
Baradas, too! — league with our foes of Spain! —
Lead our Italian armies — what! to Paris! —
Capture the King — my health require repose —
Make me subscribe my proper abdication —
Orleans, my brother, Regent! — Saints of Heaven!
These are the men I loved!
(BARADAS *draws — attempts to rush out — is arrested.* ORLEANS, *endeavoring to escape more quickly, meets* JOSEPH'S *eye and stops short.* RICHELIEU *falls back.*)
JOSEPH. See to the Cardinal.

Baradas. He's dying! — and I yet shall dupe the King.
Louis (*rushing to* Richelieu). Richelieu! — Lord Cardinal! — 'tis *I* resign!
Reign thou!
Joseph. Alas! too late! — he faints!
Louis. Reign, Richelieu!
Richelieu (*feebly*). With absolute power?
Louis. Most absolute! Oh, live!
If not for me — for France!
Richelieu. France!
Louis. Oh! this treason!
The army — Orleans — Bouillon — Heavens! — the Spaniard!
Where will they be next week?
Richelieu (*starting up*). There, — at my feet!
(*To* First *and* Second Secretaries.) Ere the clock strike! —
The Envoys have their answer!
(*To* Third Secretary, *with a ring.*) This to De Chavigny — he knows the rest —
No need of parchment here — he must not halt
For sleep — for food — In *my* name — Mine! — he will
Arrest the Duc de Bouillon at the head
Of his army! — Ho! there, Count de Baradas,
Thou hast lost the stake. — Away with him!
(*As the Guards open the folding-doors, a view of the ante-room beyond, lined with Courtiers.* Baradas *passes thro' the line.*)
Ha! — ha! —
(*Snatching* De Mauprat's *death warrant from the Officer.*)
See here, De Mauprat's death-writ, Julie! —
Parchment for battledores! — Embrace your husband!
At last the old man blesses you!
Julie. O joy!
You are saved, you live — I hold you in these arms!
De Mauprat. Never to part —
Julie. No — never, Adrien — never!
Louis (*peevishly*). One moment makes a startling cure, Lord Cardinal.
Richelieu. Ay, Sire, for in one moment there did pass
Into this wither'd frame the might of France! —
My own dear France. — I have thee yet — I have saved thee!
I clasp thee still! it was thy voice that call'd me
Back from the tomb! What mistress like our country?
Louis. For Mauprat's pardon — well! But Julie, — Richelieu,
Leave me one thing to love!
Richelieu. A subject's luxury!
Yet, if you must love something, Sire — *love me!*
Louis (*smiling in spite of himself*). Fair proxy for a fresh young Demoiselle!
Richelieu. Your heart speaks for my clients: — Kneel, my children,
And thank your King. —
Julie. Ah, tears like these, my Liege,
Are dews that mount to Heaven.
Louis. Rise — rise — be happy.
(*Retires.* Richelieu *beckons to* De Beringhen.)
De Beringhen (*falteringly*). My Lord — you are — most — happily recover'd.
Richelieu. But you are pale, dear Beringhen: — this air
Suits not your delicate frame — I long have thought so:
Sleep not another night in Paris: — Go, —
Or else your precious life may be in danger.
Leave France, dear Beringhen!
De Beringhen. I shall have time;
More than I ask'd for, — to discuss the pâté. (*Exit.*)
Richelieu (*to* Orleans). For you, repentance — absence, and confession!
(*To* François.) Never say *fail* again. Brave Boy!
(*To* Joseph.) He'll be —
A Bishop first.
Joseph. Ah, Cardinal —
Richelieu. Ah, Joseph!
(*To* Louis, *as* De Mauprat *and* Julie *converse apart.*)

See, my Liege — see thro' plots and counterplots —
Thro' gain and loss — thro' glory and disgrace —
Along the plains, where passionate Discord rears
Eternal Babel — still the holy stream
Of human happiness glides on!
Louis. And must we
Thank for *that* also — our prime minister?
Richelieu. No — let us own it: — there is One above
Sways the harmonious mystery of the world
Ev'n better than prime ministers.
Alas!
Our glories float between the earth and heaven
Like clouds that seem pavilions of the sun,
And are the playthings of the casual wind;
Still, like the cloud which drops on unseen crags
The dews the wild flower feeds on, our ambition
May from its airy height drop gladness down
On unsuspected virtue; — and the flower
May bless the cloud when it hath pass'd away!

LONDON ASSURANCE

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

By DION L. BOUCICAULT

(1841)

TO

CHARLES KEMBLE

THIS COMEDY (WITH HIS KIND PERMISSION) IS DEDICATED BY HIS FERVENT ADMIRER AND HUMBLE SERVANT DION L. BOUCICAULT

CHARACTERS IN THE COMEDY

Sir Harcourt Courtly.
Max Harkaway.
Charles Courtly.
Mr. Spanker.
Dazzle.
Mark Meddle.
Cool (valet).
Simpson (butler).
Martin.
Lady Gay Spanker.
Grace Harkaway.
Pert.

The Scene lies in London and Gloucestershire in 1841.
Time — Three days.

LONDON ASSURANCE

ACT I.

Scene I. — *An ante-room in* Sir Harcourt Courtly's *house in Belgrave Square.*

(*Enter* Cool.)

Cool. Half-past nine, and Mr. Charles has not yet returned: I am in a fever of dread. If his father happen to rise earlier than usual on any morning, he is sure to ask first for Mr. Charles. Poor deluded old gentleman — he little thinks how he is deceived.

(*Enter* Martin, *lazily.*)

Well, Martin, he has not come home yet?

Martin. No; and I have not had a wink of sleep all night — I cannot stand this any longer; I shall give warning. This is the fifth night Mr. Courtly has remained out, and I am obliged to stand at the hall window to watch for him.

Cool. You know if Sir Harcourt was aware that we connived at his son's irregularities, we should all be discharged.

Martin. I have used up all my common excuses on his duns. — "Call again," "Not at home," and "Send it down to you," won't serve any more; and Mr. Crust, the wine-merchant, swears he will be paid.

Cool. So they all say. Why, he has arrests out against him already. I've seen the fellows watching the door — (*loud knock and ring heard*) — there he is, just in time — quick, Martin, for I expect Sir William's bell every moment — (*bell rings*) — and there it is. (*Exit* Martin, *slowly.*) Thank heaven! he will return to college to-morrow, and this heavy responsibility will be taken off my shoulders. A valet is as difficult a post to fill properly as that of prime minister. (*Exit.*)

Young Courtly (*without*). Hollo!

Dazzle (*without*). Steady!

(*Enter* Young Courtly *and* Dazzle.)

Young Courtly. Hollo-o-o!

Dazzle. Hush! what are you about, howling like a Hottentot. Sit down there, and thank heaven you are in Belgrave Square, instead of Bow Street.

Young Courtly. D—d — damn Bow Street.

Dazzle. Oh, with all my heart! — you have not seen as much of it as I have.

Young Courtly. I say — let me see — what was I going to say? — oh, look here — (*He pulls out a large assortment of knockers, bell-pulls, etc., from his pocket.*) There! dam'me! I'll puzzle the two-penny postmen, — I'll deprive them of their right of disturbing the neighborhood. That black lion's head did belong to old Vampire, the money-lender; this bell-pull to Miss Stitch, the milliner.

Dazzle. And this brass griffin —

Young Courtly. That! oh, let me see — I think — I twisted that off our own hall-door as I came in, while you were paying the cab.

Dazzle. What shall I do with them?

Young Courtly. Pack 'em in a small hamper, and send 'em to the sitting magistrate with my father's compliments; in the mean time, come into my room, and I'll astonish you with some Burgundy.

(*Re-enter* Cool.)

Cool. Mr. Charles —

Young Courtly. Out! out! not at home to any one.

Cool. And drunk —

Young Courtly. As a lord.

Cool. If Sir Harcourt knew this, he would go mad, he would discharge me.

Young Courtly. You flatter yourself; that would be no proof of his insanity. — (*To* Dazzle.) This is Cool, sir, Mr. Cool; he is the best liar in London — there is a pungency about his invention, and an originality in his equivocation, that is perfectly refreshing.

Cool (*aside*). Why, Mr. Charles, where did you pick him up?

Young Courtly. You mistake, he picked *me* up.

(*Bell rings.*)

Cool. Here comes Sir Harcourt — pray do not let him see you in this state.

Young Courtly. State! what do you mean? I am in a beautiful state.

Cool. I should lose my character.

Young Courtly. That would be a fortunate epoch in your life, Cool.

Cool. Your father would discharge me.

Young Courtly. Cool, my dad is an old ass!

Cool. Retire to your own room, for heaven's sake, Mr. Charles.

Young Courtly. I'll do so for my own sake. (*To* Dazzle.) I say, old fellow, (*staggering*) just hold the door steady while I go in.

Dazzle. This way. Now, then! — take care!

(*Helps him into the room.*)

(*Enter* Sir Harcourt Courtly *in an elegant dressing-gown, and Greek scull-cap and tassels, etc.*)

Sir Harcourt. Cool, is breakfast ready?

Cool. Quite ready, Sir Harcourt.

Sir Harcourt. Apropos. I omitted to mention that I expect Squire Harkaway to join us this morning, and you must prepare for my departure to Oak Hall immediately.

Cool. Leave town in the middle of the season, Sir Harcourt? So unprecedented a proceeding!

Sir Harcourt. It is. I confess it, there is but one power could effect such a miracle, — that is divinity.

Cool. How!

Sir Harcourt. In female form, of course. Cool, I am about to present society with a second Lady Courtly; young — blushing eighteen; — lovely! I have her portrait; rich! I have her banker's account; — an heiress, and a Venus!

Cool. Lady Courtly could be none other.

Sir Harcourt. Ha! ha! Cool, your manners are above your station. — Apropos, I shall find no further use for my brocaded dressing-gown.

Cool. I thank you, Sir Harcourt; might I ask who the fortunate lady is?

Sir Harcourt. Certainly; Miss Grace Harkaway, the niece of my old friend, Max.

Cool. Have you never seen the lady, sir?

Sir Harcourt. Never — that is, yes — eight years ago. Having been, as you know, on the continent for the last seven years, I have not had the opportunity of paying my devoirs. Our connection and betrothal was a very extraordinary one. Her father's estates were contiguous to mine; — being a penurious, miserly, *ugly* old scoundrel, he made a market of my indiscretion, and supplied my extravagance with large sums of money on mortgages, his great desire being to unite the two properties. About seven years ago, he died — leaving Grace, a girl, to the guardianship of her uncle, with this will: — if, on attaining the age of nineteen, she would consent to marry me, I should receive those deeds, and all his property, as her dowry. If she refused to comply with this condition, they should revert to my heir-presumptive or apparent. — She consents.

Cool. Who would not?

Sir Harcourt. I consent to receive her 15,000*l.* a year.

Cool (*aside*). Who would not?

Sir Harcourt. So prepare, Cool, prepare; — but where is my boy, where is Charles?

Cool. Why — oh, he is gone out, Sir Harcourt; yes, gone out to take a walk.

Sir Harcourt. Poor child! A perfect child in heart — a sober, placid mind — the simplicity and verdure of boyhood, kept fresh and unsullied by any contact with society. Tell me, Cool, at what time was he in bed last night?

Cool. Half-past nine, Sir Harcourt.

Sir Harcourt. Half-past nine! Beautiful! What an original idea! Reposing in cherub slumbers, while all around him teems with drinking and debauchery! Primitive sweetness of nature! No pilot-coated, bear-skinned brawling!

Cool. Oh, Sir Harcourt!

Sir Harcourt. No cigar-smoking —

Cool. Faints at the smell of one.

Sir Harcourt. No brandy and water bibbing —

Cool. Doesn't know the taste of anything stronger than barley-water.

Sir Harcourt. No night parading —

Cool. Never heard the clock strike twelve, except at noon.

Sir Harcourt. In fact, he is my son, and became a gentleman by right of paternity. He inherited my manners.

(*Enter* Martin.)

Martin. Mr. Harkaway!

(*Enter* Max Harkaway.)

Max. Squire Harkaway, fellow, or Max Harkaway, another time. (Martin *bows, and exit.*) Ah! Ha! Sir Harcourt, I'm devilish glad to see ye! Gi' me your fist. Dang it, but I'm glad to see ye! Let me see. Six — seven years, or more, since we have met. How quickly they have flown!

Sir Harcourt (*throwing off his studied manner*). Max, Max! Give me your hand, old boy. — (*Aside.*) Ah! he *is* glad to see me. There is no fawning pretence about that squeeze. Cool, you may retire.

(*Exit* Cool.)

Max. Why, you are looking quite rosy.

Sir Harcourt. Ah! ah! rosy! Am I too florid?

Max. Not a bit; not a bit.

Sir Harcourt. I thought so. — (*Aside.*) Cool said I had put too much on.

Max. How comes it, Courtly, that you manage to retain your youth? See, I'm as grey as an old badger, or a wild rabbit; while you are — are as black as a young rook. I say, whose head grew your hair, eh?

Sir Harcourt. Permit me to remark that all the beauties of my person are of home manufacture. Why should you be surprised at my youth? I have scarcely thrown off the giddiness of a very boy — elasticity of limb — buoyancy of soul! Remark this position — (*Throws himself into an attitude.*) I held that attitude for ten minutes at Lady Acid's last *réunion*, at the express desire of one of our first sculptors, while he was making a sketch of me for the Apollo.

Max (*aside*). Making a butt of thee for their gibes.

Sir Harcourt. Lady Sarah Sarcasm started up, and, pointing to my face, ejaculated, "Good gracious! Does not Sir Harcourt remind you of the countenance of Ajax, in the Pompeian portrait?"

Max. Ajax! — humbug!

Sir Harcourt. You are complimentary.

Max. I'm a plain man, and always speak my mind. What's in a face or figure? Does a Grecian nose entail a good temper? Does a waspish waist indicate a good heart? Or, do oily perfumed locks necessarily thatch a well-furnished brain?

Sir Harcourt. It's an undeniable fact, — *plain* people always praise the beauties of the *mind*.

Max. Excuse the insinuation; I had thought the first Lady Courtly had surfeited you with beauty.

Sir Harcourt. No; she lived fourteen months with me, and then eloped with an intimate friend. Etiquette compelled me to challenge the seducer; so I received satisfaction — and a bullet in my shoulder at the same time. However, I had the consolation of knowing that he was the handsomest man of the age. She did not insult me, by running away with a d—d ill-looking scoundrel.

Max. That certainly was flattering.

Sir Harcourt. I felt so, as I pocketed the ten thousand pounds damages.

Max. That must have been a great balm to your sore honor.

Sir Harcourt. It was — Max, my honor would have died without it; for on that year the wrong horse won the Derby — by some mistake. It was one of the luckiest chances — a thing that does not happen twice in a man's life — the opportunity of getting rid of his wife and his debts at the same time.

Max. Tell the truth, Courtly! Did you not feel a little frayed in your delicacy? — your honor, now? Eh?

Sir Harcourt. Not a whit. Why should I? I married *money*, and I received it, — virgin gold! My delicacy and honor had nothing to do with hers. The world pities the bereaved husband, when it should congratulate. No, — the affair made a sensation, and I was the object. Besides, it is vulgar to make a parade of one's feelings, however acute they may be: impenetrability of countenance is the sure sign of your highly-bred man of fashion.

Max. So, a man must, therefore, lose his wife and his money with a smile, — in fact, every thing he possesses but his temper.

Sir Harcourt. Exactly, — and greet ruin with *vive la bagatelle!* For example, — your modish beauty never discomposes the shape of her features with convulsive laughter. A smile rewards the *bon mot*, and also shows the whiteness of her teeth. She never weeps impromptu, — tears might destroy the economy of her cheek. Scenes are vulgar, — hysterics obsolete: she exhibits a calm, placid, impenetrable lake, whose surface is reflection, but of unfathomable depth, — a statue, whose life is hypothetical, and not a *prima facie* fact.

Max. Well, give me the girl that will fly at your eyes in an argument, and stick to her point like a fox to his own tail.

Sir Harcourt. But etiquette! Max, — remember etiquette!

Max. Damn etiquette! I have seen a man who thought it sacrilege to eat fish with a knife, that would not scruple to rise up and rob his brother of his birthright in a gambling-house. Your thoroughbred, well-blooded heart will seldom kick over the traces of good feeling. That's my opinion, and I don't care who knows it.

Sir Harcourt. Pardon me, — etiquette is the pulse of society, by regulating which the body politic is retained in health. I consider myself one of the faculty in the art.

Max. Well, well; you are a living libel upon common sense, for you are old enough to know better.

Sir Harcourt. Old enough! What do you mean? Old! I still retain all my little juvenile indiscretions, which your niece's beauties must teach me to discard. I have not sown my wild oats yet.

Max. Time you did, at sixty-three.

Sir Harcourt. Sixty-three! Good God! — forty, 'pon my life! forty, next March.

Max. Why, you are older than I am.

Sir Harcourt. Oh! you are old enough to be my father.

Max. Well, if I am, I am; that's etiquette, I suppose. Poor Grace! how often I have pitied her fate! That a young and beautiful creature should be driven into wretched splendor, or miserable poverty!

Sir Harcourt. Wretched! wherefore? Lady Courtly wretched! Impossible!

Max. Will she not be compelled to marry you, whether she likes you or not? — a choice between you and poverty. (*Aside.*) And hang me if it isn't a tie! — But why do you not introduce your son Charles to me? I have not seen him since he was a child. You would never permit him to accept any of my invitations to spend his vacation at Oak Hall, — of course, we shall have the pleasure of his company now.

Sir Harcourt. He is not fit to enter society yet. He is a studious, sober boy.

Max. Boy! Why, he's five-and-twenty.

Sir Harcourt. Good gracious! Max, — you will permit me to know my own son's age, — he is not twenty.

Max. I'm dumb.

Sir Harcourt. You will excuse me while I indulge in the process of dressing. — Cool!

(*Enter* Cool.)

Prepare my toilet. (*Exit* Cool.) That is a ceremony, which, with me, supersedes all others. I consider it a duty which every gentleman owes to society — to render himself as agreeable an object as possible — and the least compliment a mortal can pay to nature, when she honors him by bestowing extra care in the manufacture of his person, is to display her taste to the best possible advantage; and so, *au revoir*. (*Exit.*)

Max. That's a good soul — he has his faults, and who has not? Forty years of age! Oh, monstrous! — but he does look uncommonly young for sixty, spite of his foreign locks and complexion.

(*Enter* Dazzle.)

Dazzle. Who's my friend, with the stick and gaiters, I wonder — one of the family — the governor maybe.

Max. Who's this? Oh, Charles — is that you, my boy? How are you? (*Aside.*) This is the *boy.*

Dazzle [*aside*]. He knows me — he is too respectable for a bailiff. (*Aloud.*) How are you?

Max. Your father has just left me.

Dazzle (*aside*). The devil he has! He's been dead these ten years. Oh! I see, he thinks I'm young Courtly. (*Aloud.*) The honor you would confer upon me, I must unwillingly disclaim, — I am not Mr. Courtly.

Max. I beg pardon — a friend, I suppose.

Dazzle. Oh, a most intimate friend — a friend of years — distantly related to the family — one of my ancestors married one of his. (*Aside.*) Adam and Eve.

Max. Are you on a visit here?

Dazzle. Yes. Oh! yes. (*Aside.*) Rather a short one, I'm afraid.

Max (*aside*). This appears a dashing kind of fellow — as he is a friend of Sir Harcourt's, I'll invite him to the wedding. (*Aloud.*) Sir, if you are not otherwise engaged, I shall feel honored by your company at my house, Oak Hall, Gloucestershire.

Dazzle. Your name is —

Max. Harkaway — Max Harkaway.

Dazzle. Harkaway — let me see — I ought to be related to the Harkaways, somehow.

Max. A wedding is about to come off — will you take a part on the occasion?

Dazzle. With pleasure! any part, but that of the husband.

Max. Have you any previous engagement?

Dazzle. I was thinking — eh! why, let me see. (*Aside.*) Promised to meet my tailor and his account to-morrow; however, I'll postpone that. (*Aloud.*) Have you good shooting?

Max. Shooting! Why, there's no shooting at this time of the year.

Dazzle. Oh! I'm in no hurry — I can wait till the season, of course. I was only speaking precautionally — you have good shooting?

Max. The best in the country.

Dazzle. Make yourself comfortable! — Say no more — I'm your man — wait till you see how I'll murder your preserves.

Max. Do you hunt?

Dazzle. Pardon me — but will you repeat that? (*Aside.*) Delicious and expensive idea!

Max. You ride?

Dazzle. Anything! Everything! From a blood to a broomstick. Only catch me a flash of lightning, and let me get on the back of it, and dam'me if I wouldn't astonish the elements.

Max. Ha! ha!

Dazzle. I'd put a girdle round about the earth, in very considerably less than forty minutes.

Max. Ah! ha! We'll show old Fiddlestrings how to spend the day. He imagines that Nature, at the earnest request of Fashion, made summer days long for him to saunter in the Park, and winter nights, that he might have good time to get cleared out at hazard or at whist. Give me the yelping of a pack of hounds before the shuffling of a pack of cards. What state can match the chase in full cry, each vying with his fellow which shall be most happy? A thousand deaths fly by unheeded in that one hour's life of ecstasy. Time is outrun, and Nature seems to grudge our bliss by making the day so short.

Dazzle. No, for then rises up the idol of my great adoration.

Max. Who's that?

Dazzle. The bottle — that lends a lustre to the soul! — When the world puts on its night-cap and extinguishes the sun — then comes the bottle! Oh, mighty wine! Don't ask me to apostrophise.

Wine and love are the only two indescribable things in nature; but I prefer the wine, because its consequences are not entailed, and are more easily got rid of.

Max. How so?

Dazzle. Love ends in matrimony, wine in soda water.

Max. Well, I can promise you as fine a bottle as ever was cracked.

Dazzle. Never mind the bottle, give me the wine. Say no more; but, when I arrive, just shake one of my hands, and put the key of the cellar into the other, and if I don't make myself intimately acquainted with its internal organization — well, I say nothing, — time will show.

Max. I foresee some happy days.

Dazzle. And I some glorious nights.

Max. It mustn't be a flying visit.

Dazzle. I despise the word — I'll stop a month with you.

Max. Or a year or two.

Dazzle. I'll live and die with you!

Max. Ha! ha! Remember Max Harkaway, Oak Hall, Gloucestershire.

Dazzle. I'll remember — fare ye well. (Max *is going.*) I say, holloa! — Tallyho-o-o-o!

Max. Yoicks! — Tallyho-o-o-o! (*Exit.*)

Dazzle. There I am — quartered for a couple of years at the least. The old boy wants somebody to ride his horses, shoot his game, and keep a restraint on the morals of the parish: I'm eligible. What a lucky accident to meet young Courtly last night! Who could have thought it? — Yesterday, I could not make certain of a dinner, except at my own proper peril; to-day, I would flirt with a banquet.

(*Enter* Young Courtly.)

Young Courtly. What infernal row was that? Why, (*seeing* Dazzle) are you here still?

Dazzle. Yes. Ain't you delighted? I'll ring, and send the servant for my luggage.

Young Courtly. The devil you will! Why, you don't mean to say you seriously intend to take up a permanent residence here? (*He rings bell.*)

Dazzle. Now, that's a most inhospitable insinuation.

Young Courtly. Might I ask your name?

Dazzle. With a deal of pleasure — Richard Dazzle, late of the Unattached Volunteers, vulgarly entitled the Dirty Buffs.

(*Enter* Martin.)

Young Courtly. Then, Mr. Richard Dazzle, I have the honor of wishing you a very good morning. Martin, show this gentleman the door.

Dazzle. If he does, I'll kick Martin out of it. — No offence. (*Exit* Martin.) Now, sir, permit me to place a dioramic view of your conduct before you. After bringing you safely home this morning — after indulgently waiting, whenever you took a passing fancy to a knocker or bell-pull — after conducting a retreat that would have reflected honor on Napoleon — you would kick me into the street, like a mangy cur: and that's what you call gratitude. Now, to show you how superior I am to petty malice, I give you an unlimited invitation to my house — my country house — to remain as long as you please.

Young Courtly. Your house!

Dazzle. Oak Hall, Gloucestershire, — fine old place — for further particulars see roadbook; that is, it *nominally* belongs to my old friend and relation, Max Harkaway; but I'm privileged. Capital old fellow — say, shall we be honored?

Young Courtly. Sir, permit me to hesitate a moment. (*Aside.*) Let me see — I go back to college to-morrow, so I shall not be missing; tradesmen begin to dun —

(*Enter* Cool.)

I hear thunder; here is shelter ready for me.

Cool. Oh, Mr. Charles, Mr. Solomon Isaacs is in the hall, and swears he will remain till he has arrested you!

Young Courtly. Does he! — sorry he is so obstinate — take him my compliments, and I will bet him five to one he will not.

Dazzle. Double or quits, with my kind regards.

Cool. But, sir, he has discovered the house in Curzon Street; he says he is aware the furniture, at least, belongs to you, and he will put a man in immediately.

Young Courtly. That's awkward — what's to be done?

Dazzle. Ask him whether he couldn't make it a woman.

Young Courtly. I must trust that to fate.

Dazzle. I will give you my acceptance, if it will be of any use to you; it is of none to me.

Young Courtly. No, sir; but in reply to your most generous and kind invitation, if you be in earnest, I shall feel delighted to accept it.

Dazzle. Certainly.

Young Courtly. Then off we go — through the stables — down the mews, and so slip through my friend's fingers.

Dazzle. But, stay, you must do the polite; say farewell to him before you part. Damn it, don't cut him!

Young Courtly. You jest!

Dazzle. Here, lend me a card. (Courtly *gives him one.*) Now, then, (*writes*) "Our respects to Mr. Isaacs — sorry to have been prevented from seeing him." — Ha! ha!

Young Courtly. Ha! ha!

Dazzle. We'll send him up some game.

Young Courtly (*to* Cool). Don't let my father see him. (*Exeunt.*)

Cool. What's this? — "Mr. Charles Courtly, P.P.C., returns thanks for obliging inquiries." (*Exit.*)

ACT II.

Scene I. — *The lawn before Oak Hall, a fine Elizabethan mansion; a drawing-room is seen through large French windows at the back. Statues, urns, and garden chairs about the stage.*

(*Enter* Pert *and* James.)

Pert. James, Miss Grace desires me to request that you will watch at the avenue, and let her know when the squire's carriage is seen on the London road.

James. I will go to the lodge. (*Exit.*)

Pert. How I do long to see what kind of a man Sir Harcourt Courtly is! They say he is sixty; so he must be old, and consequently ugly. If I was Miss Grace, I would rather give up all my fortune and marry the man I liked, than go to church with a stuffed eel-skin. But taste is everything, — she doesn't seem to care whether he is sixty or sixteen; jokes at love; prepares for matrimony as she would for dinner; says it is a necessary evil, and what can't be cured must be endured. Now, I say this is against all nature; and she is either no woman, or a deeper one than I am, if she prefers an old man to a young one. Here she comes! looking as cheerfully as if she was going to marry Mr. Jenks! my Mr. Jenks! whom nobody won't lead to the halter till I have that honor.

(*Enter* Grace *from the drawing-room.*)

Grace. Well, Pert? any sign of the squire yet?

Pert. No, Miss Grace; but James has gone to watch the road.

Grace. In my uncle's letter he mentions a Mr. Dazzle, whom he has invited; so you must prepare a room for him. He is some friend of my husband that is to be, and my uncle seems to have taken an extraordinary predilection for him. Apropos! I must not forget to have a bouquet for the dear old man when he arrives.

Pert. The dear old man! Do you mean Sir Harcourt?

Grace. Law! no, my uncle, of course. (*Plucking flowers.*) What do I care for Sir Harcourt Courtly?

Pert. Isn't it odd, Miss, you have never seen your intended, though it has been so long since you were betrothed?

Grace. Not at all; marriage matters are conducted now-a-days in a most mercantile manner; consequently a previous acquaintance is by no means indispensable. Besides, my *prescribed* husband has been upon the continent for the benefit of his — property! They say a southern climate is a great restorer of consumptive estates.

Pert. Well, Miss, for my own part, I should like to have a good look at my bargain before I paid for it; 'specially when one's life is the price of the article. But why, ma'am, do you consent to marry in this blind-man's-buff sort of manner? What would you think if he were not quite so old?

Grace. I should think he was a little younger.

Pert. I should like him all the better.

Grace. That wouldn't I. A young husband might expect affection and nonsense, which 'twould be deceit in me to render; nor would he permit me to remain with my uncle. — Sir Harcourt takes me with the incumbrances on his estate, and I shall beg to be left among the rest of the live stock.

Pert. Ah, Miss! but some day you might chance to stumble over *the* man, — what could you do then?

Grace. Do! beg *the* man's pardon, and request *the* man to pick me up again.

Pert. Ah! you were never in love, Miss?

Grace. I never was, nor will be, till I am tired of myself and common sense. Love is a pleasant scape-goat for a little epidemic madness. I must have been inoculated in my infancy, for the infection passes over poor me in contempt.

(*Enter* James.)

James. Two gentlemen, Miss Grace, have just alighted.

Grace. Very well, James. (*Exit* James.) Love is pictured as a boy; in another century they will be wiser, and paint him as a fool, with cap and bells, without a thought above the jingling of his own folly. Now, Pert, remember this as a maxim, — A woman is always in love with one of two things.

Pert. What are they, Miss?

Grace. A man, or herself — and I know which is the most profitable. (*Exit.*)

Pert. I wonder what my Jenks would say, if I was to ask him. Law! here comes Mr. Meddle, his rival, contemporary solicitor, as he calls him, — a nasty, prying, ugly wretch — what brings him here? He comes puffed with some news. (*Retires.*)

(*Enter* Meddle, *with a newspaper.*)

Meddle. I have secured the only newspaper in the village — my character as an attorney-at-law depended on the monopoly of its information. — I took it up by chance, when this paragraph met my astonished view: (*Reads.*) "We understand that the contract of marriage so long in abeyance on account of the lady's minority, is about to be celebrated, at Oak Hall, Gloucestershire, the well-known and magnificent mansion of Maximilian Harkaway, Esq., between Sir Harcourt Courtly, Baronet, of fashionable celebrity, and Miss Grace Harkaway, niece to the said Mr. Harkaway. The preparations are proceeding on the good old English style." Is it possible! I seldom swear, except in a witness box, but damme, had it been known in the village, my reputation would have been lost; my voice in the parlor of the Red Lion mute, and Jenks, a fellow who calls himself a lawyer, without more capability than a broomstick, and as much impudence as a young barrister, after getting a verdict, by mistake; why, he would actually have taken the Reverend Mr. Spout by the button, which is now my sole privilege. Ah! here is Mrs. Pert; couldn't have hit upon a better person. I'll cross-examine her — Lady's maid to Miss Grace, confidential purloiner of second-hand silk — a *nisi prius* of her mistress — Ah! sits on the woolsack in the pantry, and dictates the laws of kitchen etiquette. — Ah! Mrs. Pert, good morning; permit me to say, — and my word as a legal character is not unduly considered — I venture to affirm, that you look a — quite like the — a —

Pert. Law! Mr. Meddle.

Meddle. Exactly like the law.

Pert. Ha! indeed; complimentary, I confess; like the law; tedious, prosy, made up of musty paper. You sha'n't have a long suit of me. Good morning! (*Going.*)

Meddle. Stay, Mrs. Pert; don't calumniate my calling, or disseminate vulgar prejudices.

Pert. Vulgar! you talk of vulgarity to

me! you, whose sole employment is to sneak about like a pig, snouting out the dust-hole of society, and feeding upon the bad ends of vice! you, who live upon the world's iniquity; you miserable specimen of a bad six-and-eightpence!

Meddle. But, Mrs. Pert —

Pert. Don't but me, sir; I won't be butted by any such low fellow.

Meddle. This is slander; an action will lie.

Pert. Let it lie; lying is your trade. I'll tell you what, Mr. Meddle: if I had my will, I would soon put a check on your prying propensities. I'd treat you as the farmers do the inquisitive hogs.

Meddle. How?

Pert. I would ring your nose.

(*Exit.*)

Meddle. Not much information elicited from that witness. Jenks is at the bottom of this. I have very little hesitation in saying, Jenks is a libellous rascal; I heard reports that he was undermining my character here, through Mrs. Pert. Now I'm certain of it. Assault is expensive; but I certainly will put by a small weekly stipendium, until I can afford to kick Jenks.

Dazzle (*outside*). Come along; this way!

Meddle. Ah! whom have we here? Visitors; I'll address them.

(*Enter* Dazzle.)

Dazzle. Who's this, I wonder; one of the family? I must know him. (*To* Meddle.) Ah! how are ye?

Meddle. Quite well. Just arrived? — ah! — um! — Might I request the honor of knowing whom I address?

Dazzle. Richard Dazzle, Esquire; and you —

Meddle. Mark Meddle, Attorney-at-law.

(*Enter* Young Courtly.)

Dazzle. What detained you?

Young Courtly. My dear fellow, I have just seen such a woman!

Dazzle (*aside*). Hush! (*Aloud.*) Permit me to introduce you to my very old friend, Meddle. He's a capital fellow; know him.

Meddle. I feel honored. Who is your friend?

Dazzle. Oh, he? What, my friend? Oh! Augustus Hamilton.

Young Courtly. How d'ye do? (*Looking off.*) There she is again!

Meddle (*looking off*). Why, that is Miss Grace.

Dazzle. Of course, Grace.

Young Courtly. I'll go and introduce myself.

(Dazzle *stops him.*)

Dazzle (*aside*). What are you about? would you insult my old friend, Puddle, by running away? (*Aloud.*) I say, Puddle, just show my friend the lions, while I say how d'ye do to my young friend, Grace. (*Aside.*) Cultivate his acquaintance.

(*Exit.* — Young Courtly *looks after him.*)

Meddle. Mr. Hamilton, might I take the liberty?

Young Courtly (*looking off*). Confound the fellow!

Meddle. Sir, what did you remark?

Young Courtly. She's gone! Oh, are you here still, Mr. Thingomerry Puddle?

Meddle. Meddle, sir, Meddle, in the list of attorneys.

Young Courtly. Well, Muddle, or Puddle, or whoever you are, you are a bore.

Meddle (*aside*). How excessively odd! Mrs. Pert said I was a pig; now I'm a boar! I wonder what they'll make of me next.

Young Courtly. Mr. Thingamy, will you take a word of advice?

Meddle. Feel honored.

Young Courtly. Get out.

Meddle. Do you mean to — I don't understand.

Young Courtly. Delighted to quicken your apprehension. You are an ass, Puddle.

Meddle. Ha! ha! another quadruped! Yes; beautiful — (*Aside.*) I wish he'd call me something libellous: but that would be too much to expect. — (*Aloud.*) Anything else?

Young Courtly. Some miserable, pettifogging scoundrel!

Meddle. Good! ha! ha!

Young Courtly. What do you mean by laughing at me?

Meddle. Ha! ha! ha! excellent! delicious!

Young Courtly. Mr. —— are you ambitious of a kicking?

Meddle. Very, very — Go on — kick — go on.

Young Courtly (*looking off*). Here she comes! I'll speak to her.

Meddle. But, sir — sir —

Young Courtly. Oh, go to the devil!

(*He runs off.*)

Meddle. There, there's a chance lost — gone! I have no hesitation in saying that, in another minute, I should have been kicked; literally kicked — a legal luxury. Costs, damages, and actions rose up like sky-rockets in my aspiring soul. With golden tails reaching to the infinity of my hopes, (*looking*) — they are coming this way, Mr. Hamilton in close conversation with Lady Courtly that is to be. Crim. Con. — Courtly versus Hamilton — damages problematical — Meddle, chief witness for plaintiff — guinea a day — professional man! I'll take down their conversation verbatim.

(*He retires behind a bush.*)

(*Enter* Grace, *followed by* Young Courtly.)

Grace. Perhaps you would follow your friend into the dining-room; refreshment after your long journey must be requisite.

Young Courtly. Pardon me, madam; but the lovely garden and the loveliness before me is better refreshment than I could procure in any dining-room.

Grace. Ha! Your company and compliments arrive together.

Young Courtly. I trust that a passing remark will not spoil so welcome an introduction as this by offending you.

Grace. I am not certain that anything you could say would offend me.

Young Courtly. I never meant —

Grace. I thought not. In turn, pardon me, when I request you will commence your visit with this piece of information: I consider compliments impertinent, and sweetmeat language fulsome.

Young Courtly. I would condemn my tongue to a Pythagorean silence if I thought it could attempt to flatter.

Grace. It strikes me, sir, that you are a stray bee from the hive of fashion; if so, reserve your honey for its proper cell. A truce to compliments. — You have just arrived *from town*, I apprehend.

Young Courtly. This moment I left mighty London, under the fever of a full season, groaning with the noisy pulse of wealth and the giddy whirling brain of fashion. Enchanting, busy London! how have I prevailed on myself to desert you! Next week the new ballet comes out, — the week after comes Ascot. — Oh!

Grace. How agonizing must be the reflection.

Young Courtly. Torture! Can you inform me how you manage to avoid suicide here? If there was but an opera, even, within twenty miles! We couldn't get up a rustic ballet among the village girls? No? — ah!

Grace. I am afraid you would find that difficult. How I contrive to support life I don't know — it is wonderful — but I have not precisely contemplated suicide yet, nor do I miss the opera.

Young Courtly. How can you manage to kill time?

Grace. I can't. Men talk of killing time, while time quietly kills them. I have many employments — this week I devote to study and various amusements — next week to being married — the following week to repentance, perhaps.

Young Courtly. Married!

Grace. You seem surprised; I believe it is of frequent occurrence in the metropolis. — Is it not?

Young Courtly. Might I ask to whom?

Grace. A gentleman who has been strongly recommended to me for the situation of husband.

Young Courtly. What an extraordinary match! Would you not consider it advisable to see him, previous to incurring the consequences of such an act?

GRACE. You must be aware that fashion says otherwise. The gentleman swears eternal devotion to the lady's fortune, and the lady swears she will outvie him still. My lord's horses, and my lady's diamonds, shine through a few seasons, until a seat in Parliament, or the continent, stares them in the face; then, when thrown upon each other for resources of comfort, they begin to quarrel about the original conditions of the sale.

YOUNG COURTLY. Sale! No! that would be degrading civilization into Turkish barbarity.

GRACE. Worse, sir, a great deal worse; for there at least they do not attempt concealment of the barter; but here, every London ball-room is a marriage mart — young ladies are trotted out, while the mother, father, or chaperone plays auctioneer, and knocks them down to the highest bidder, — young men are ticketed up with their fortunes on their backs, — and Love, turned into a dapper shopman, descants on the excellent qualities of the material.

YOUNG COURTLY. Oh! that such a custom could have ever emanated from the healthy soil of an English heart!

GRACE. No. It never did — like most of our literary dandyisms and dandy literature, it was borrowed from the French.

YOUNG COURTLY. You seem to laugh at love.

GRACE. Love! why, the very word is a breathing satire upon man's reason — a mania, indigenous to humanity — nature's jester, who plays off tricks upon the world, and trips up common sense. When I'm in love, I'll write an almanac, for very lack of wit — prognosticate the sighing season — when to beware of tears — about this time, expect matrimony to be prevalent! Ha! ha! Why should I lay out my life in love's bonds upon the bare security of a man's word?

(*Enter* JAMES.)

JAMES. The Squire, madam, has just arrived, and another gentleman with him.

GRACE (*aside*). My intended, I suppose.

(*Exit* JAMES.)

YOUNG COURTLY. I perceive you are one of the railers against what is termed the follies of high life.

GRACE. No, not particularly; I deprecate all folly. By what prerogative can the west-end mint issue absurdity, which, if coined in the east, would be voted vulgar?

YOUNG COURTLY. By a sovereign right — because it has Fashion's head upon its side, and that stamps it current.

GRACE. Poor Fashion, for how many sins hast thou to answer! The gambler pawns his birth-right for fashion — the *roué* steals his friend's wife for fashion — each abandons himself to the storm of impulse, calling it the breeze of fashion.

YOUNG COURTLY. Is this idol of the world so radically vicious?

GRACE. No; the root is well enough, as the body was, until it had outgrown its native soil; but now, like a mighty giant lying over Europe, it pillows its head in Italy, its heart in France, leaving the heels alone its sole support for England.

YOUNG COURTLY. Pardon me, madam, you wrong yourself to rail against your own inheritance — the kingdom to which loveliness and wit attest your title.

GRACE. A mighty realm, forsooth, — with milliners for ministers, a cabinet of coxcombs, envy for my homage, ruin for my revenue — my right of rule depending on the shape of a bonnet or the sit of a pelisse, with the next grand noodle as my heir-apparent. Mr. Hamilton, when I am crowned, I shall feel happy to abdicate in your favor. (*Curtseys and exit.*)

YOUNG COURTLY. What did she mean by that? Hang me if I can understand her — she is evidently not used to society. Ha! — takes every word I say for infallible truth — requires the solution of a compliment, as if it were a problem in Euclid. She said she was about to marry, but I rather imagine she was in jest. 'Pon my life, I feel very queer at the contemplation of such an idea — I'll follow her. (MEDDLE *comes down.*) Oh! perhaps this booby can inform me something about her. (Meddle *makes signs at him.*) What the devil is he at!

Meddle. It won't do — no — ah! um — it's not to be done.

Young Courtly. What do you mean?

Meddle (*points after* Grace). Counsel retained — cause to come off!

Young Courtly. Cause to come off!

Meddle. Miss Grace is about to be married.

Young Courtly. Is it possible?

Meddle. Certainly. If *I* have the drawing out of the deeds —

Young Courtly. To whom?

Meddle. Ha! hem! Oh, yes! I dare say — Information being scarce in the market, I hope to make mine valuable.

Young Courtly. Married! married!

Meddle. Now I shall have another chance.

Young Courtly. I'll run and ascertain the truth of this from Dazzle.

(*Exit.*)

Meddle. It's of no use: he either dare not kick me, or he can't afford it — in either case, he is beneath my notice. Ah! who comes here? — can it be Sir Harcourt Courtly himself? It can be no other.

(*Enter* Cool.)

Sir, I have the honor to bid you welcome to Oak Hall and the village of Oldborough.

Cool (*aside*). Excessively polite. (*Aloud.*) — Sir, thank you.

Meddle. The township contains two thousand inhabitants.

Cool. Does it! I am delighted to hear it.

Meddle (*aside*). I can charge him for that — ahem — six and eightpence is not much — but it is a beginning. (*Aloud.*) If you will permit me, I can inform you of the different commodities for which it is famous.

Cool. Much obliged — but here comes Sir Harcourt Courtly, my master, and Mr. Harkaway — any other time I shall feel delighted.

Meddle. Oh! (*Aside.*) Mistook the man for the master.

(*He retires up.*)

(*Enter* Max *and* Sir Harcourt.)

Max. Here we are at last. Now give ye welcome to Oak Hall, Sir Harcourt, heartily!

Sir Harcourt (*languidly*). Cool, assist me.

(Cool *takes off his furred cloak and gloves; gives him white gloves and a white handkerchief.*)

Max. Why, you require unpacking as carefully as my best bin of port. Well, now you are decanted, tell me, what did you think of my park as we came along?

Sir Harcourt. That it would never come to an end. You said it was only a stone's throw from your infernal lodge to the house; why, it's ten miles at least.

Max. I'll do it in ten minutes any day.

Sir Harcourt. Yes, in a steam carriage. Cool, perfume my handkerchief.

Max. Don't do it. Don't! perfume in the country! why, it's high treason in the very face of Nature; 'tis introducing the robbed to the robber. Here are the sweets from which your fulsome essences are pilfered, and libelled with their names, — don't insult them, too.

Sir Harcourt (*to* Meddle). Oh! cull me a bouquet, my man!

Max (*turning*). Ah, Meddle! how are you? This is Lawyer Meddle.

Sir Harcourt. Oh! I took him for one of your people.

Meddle. Ah! naturally — um — Sir Harcourt Courtly, I have the honor to congratulate — happy occasion approaches. Ahem! I have no hesitation in saying this *very* happy occasion approaches.

Sir Harcourt. Cool, is the conversation addressed towards me?

Cool. I believe so, Sir Harcourt.

Meddle. Oh, certainly! I was complimenting you.

Sir Harcourt. Sir, you are very good; the honor is undeserved; but I am only in the habit of receiving compliments from the fair sex. Men's admiration is so damnably insipid.

Meddle. I had hoped to make a unit on that occasion.

Sir Harcourt. Yes, and you hoped to put an infernal number of ciphers after your unit on that and any other occasion.

Meddle. Ha! ha! very good. Why, I did hope to have the honor of drawing out the deeds; for, whatever Jenks may say to the contrary, I have no hesitation in saying —

Sir Harcourt (*putting him aside*). (*To* Max.) If the future Lady Courtly be visible at so unfashionable an hour as this, I shall beg to be introduced.

Max. Visible! Ever since six this morning, I'll warrant ye. Two to one she is at dinner.

Sir Harcourt. Dinner! Is it possible? Lady Courtly dine at half-past one p.m.!

Meddle. I rather prefer that hour to peck a little my —

Sir Harcourt. Dear me! who was addressing you?

Meddle. Oh! I beg pardon.

Max. Here, James! (*Calling.*)

(*Enter* James.)

Tell Miss Grace to come here directly. (*Exit* James.) Now prepare, Courtly, for, though I say it, she *is* — with the exception of my bay mare, Kitty — the handsomest thing in the country. Considering she is a biped, she is a wonder! Full of blood, sound wind and limb, plenty of bone, sweet coat, in fine condition, with a thorough-bred step, as dainty as a pet greyhound.

Sir Harcourt. Damme, don't compare her to a horse!

Max. Well, I wouldn't, but she's almost as fine a creature, — close similarities.

Meddle. Oh, very fine creature! Close similarity, amounting to identity.

Sir Harcourt. Good gracious, sir! What can a lawyer know about women!

Meddle. Everything. The consistorial court is fine study of the character, and I have no hesitation in saying that I have examined more women than Jenks, or —

Sir Harcourt. Oh, damn Jenks!

Meddle. Sir, thank you. Damn him again, sir, damn him again!

(*Enter* Grace.)

Grace. My dear uncle!

Max. Ah, Grace, you little jade, come here.

Sir Harcourt (*eyeing her through his glass*). Oh, dear! she is a rural Venus! I'm astonished and delighted.

Max. Won't you kiss your old uncle? (*He kisses her.*)

Sir Harcourt (*draws an agonizing face*). Oh! — ah — um! — *N'importe!* — my privilege in embryo — hem! It's very tantalizing, though.

Max. You are not glad to see me, you are not. (*Kissing her.*)

Sir Harcourt. Oh; no, no! (*Aside.*) That is too much. I shall do something horrible presently, if this goes on. (*Aloud.*) I should be sorry to curtail any little ebullition of affection; but — ahem! May I be permitted?

Max. Of course you may. There, Grace, is Sir Harcourt, your husband that will be. Go to him, girl.

Sir Harcourt. Permit me to do homage to the charms, the presence of which have placed me in sight of Paradise.

(Sir Harcourt *and* Grace *retire.*)

(*Enter* Dazzle.)

Dazzle. Ah! old fellow, how are you?

Max. I'm glad to see you! Are you comfortably quartered, yet, eh?

Dazzle. Splendidly quartered! What a place you've got here! Here, Hamilton.

(*Enter* Young Courtly.)

Permit me to introduce my friend, Augustus Hamilton. (*Aside.*) Capital fellow! drinks like a sieve, and rides like a thunder-storm.

Max. Sir, I'm devilish glad to see you. Here, Sir Harcourt, permit me to introduce to you —

Young Courtly. The devil!

Dazzle (*aside*). What's the matter?

YOUNG COURTLY (*aside*). Why, that is my governor, by Jupiter!

DAZZLE (*aside*). What, old Whiskers? you don't say that!

YOUNG COURTLY (*aside*). It is; what's to be done now?

MAX. Mr. Hamilton, Sir Harcourt Courtly — Sir Harcourt Courtly, Mr. Hamilton.

SIR HARCOURT. Hamilton! Good gracious! God bless me! — why, Charles, is it possible? — why, Max, that's my son!

YOUNG COURTLY (*aside*). What shall I do!

MAX. Your son!

GRACE. Your son, Sir Harcourt! have you a son as old as that gentleman!

SIR HARCOURT. No — that is — a — yes, — not by twenty years — a — Charles, why don't you answer me, sir?

YOUNG COURTLY (*aside to* DAZZLE). What shall I say?

DAZZLE (*aside*). Deny your identity.

YOUNG COURTLY (*aside*). Capital! (*Aloud.*) What's the matter, sir?

SIR HARCOURT. How came you down here, sir?

YOUNG COURTLY. By one of Newman's — best fours — in twelve hours and a quarter.

SIR HARCOURT. Isn't your name Charles Courtly?

YOUNG COURTLY. Not to my knowledge.

SIR HARCOURT. Do you mean to say that you are usually called Augustus Hamilton?

YOUNG COURTLY. Lamentable fact — and quite correct.

SIR HARCOURT. Cool, is that my son?

COOL. No, sir — it is not Mr. Charles — but is very like him.

MAX. I cannot understand all this.

GRACE (*aside*). I think I can.

DAZZLE (*aside to* YOUNG COURTLY). Give him a touch of the indignant.

YOUNG COURTLY. Allow me to say, Sir What-d'ye-call-'em Hartly —

SIR HARCOURT. Hartly, sir! Courtly, sir! Courtly!

YOUNG COURTLY. Well, Hartly, or Court-heart, or whatever your name may be, I say your conduct is — a — a —, and were it not for the presence of this lady, I should feel inclined — to — to —

SIR HARCOURT. No, no, that can't be my son, — he never would address me in that way.

MAX. What is all this?

SIR HARCOURT. Sir, your likeness to my son Charles is so astonishing, that it, for a moment — the equilibrium of my etiquette — 'pon my life, I — permit me to request your pardon.

MEDDLE (*to* SIR HARCOURT). Sir Harcourt, don't apologize, don't — bring an action. I'm witness.

SIR HARCOURT. Some one take this man away.

(*Enter* JAMES.)

JAMES. Luncheon is on the table, sir.

SIR HARCOURT. Miss Harkaway, I never swore before a lady in my life — except when I promised to love and cherish the late Lady Courtly, which I took care to preface with an apology, — I was compelled to the ceremony, and consequently not answerable for the language — but to that gentleman's identity I would have pledged — my hair.

GRACE (*aside*). If that security were called for, I suspect the answer would be — no effects.

(*Exeunt* SIR HARCOURT *and* GRACE.)

MEDDLE (*to* MAX). I have something very particular to communicate.

MAX. Can't listen at present. (*Exit.*)

MEDDLE (*to* DAZZLE *and* YOUNG COURTLY). I can afford you information, which I —

DAZZLE. Oh, don't bother! }
YOUNG COURTLY. Go to the devil! }

(*Exeunt.*)

MEDDLE. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that is the height of ingratitude. — Oh — Mr. Cool — can you oblige me? (*Presents his account.*)

COOL. Why, what is all this?

MEDDLE. Small account *versus* you — to giving information concerning the last census of the population of Oldborough and vicinity, six and eightpence.

Cool. Oh, you mean to make me pay for this, do you?

Meddle. Unconditionally.

Cool. Well, I have no objection — the charge is fair — but remember, I am a servant on board wages, — will you throw in a little advice gratis — if I give you the money?

Meddle. Ahem! — I will.

Cool. A fellow has insulted me. I want to abuse him — what terms are actionable?

Meddle. You may call him anything you please, providing there are no witnesses.

Cool. Oh, may I? (*Looks round*) — then you rascally, pettifogging scoundrel!

Meddle. Hallo!

Cool. You mean — dirty — disgrace to your profession.

Meddle. Libel — slander —

Cool. Aye, but where are your witnesses?

Meddle. Give me the costs — six and eighteen pence.

Cool. I deny that you gave me information at all.

Meddle. You do!

Cool. Yes, where are your witnesses? (*Exit.*)

Meddle. Ah — damme! (*Exit.*)

ACT III.

Scene I. — *A morning-room in Oak Hall, French windows opening to the lawn.*

(Max *and* Sir Harcourt *seated on one side,* Dazzle *on the other;* Grace *and* Young Courtly *are playing chess at back. All dressed for dinner.*)

Max (*aside to* Sir Harcourt). What can I do?

Sir Harcourt. Get rid of them civilly.

Max. What, turn them out, after I particularly invited them to stay a month or two?

Sir Harcourt. Why, they are disreputable characters; as for that young fellow, in whom my Lady Courtly appears so particularly absorbed, — I am bewildered — I have written to town for my Charles, my boy — it certainly is the most extraordinary likeness —

Dazzle. Sir Harcourt, I have an idea —

Sir Harcourt. Sir, I am delighted to hear it. — (*Aside.*) That fellow is a swindler.

Max. I met him at your house.

Sir Harcourt. Never saw him before in all my life.

Dazzle (*crossing to* Sir Harcourt). I will bet you five to one that I can beat you three out of four games at billiards, with one hand.

Sir Harcourt. No, sir.

Dazzle. I don't mind giving you ten points in fifty.

Sir Harcourt. Sir, I never gamble.

Dazzle. You don't! Well, I'll teach you — easiest thing in life — you have every requisite — good temper.

Sir Harcourt. I have not, sir.

Dazzle. A long-headed, knowing old buck.

Sir Harcourt. Sir!

(*They go up conversing with* Max.)

Grace. Really, Mr. Hamilton, you improve. — A young man pays us a visit, as you half intimate, to escape inconvenient friends — that is complimentary to us, his hosts.

Young Courtly. Nay, that is too severe.

Grace. After an acquaintanceship of two days, you sit down to teach me chess, and domestic economy at the same time. — Might I ask where you graduated in that science — where you learned all that store of matrimonial advice which you have obliged me with?

Young Courtly. I [imbibed] it, madam, from the moment I beheld you, and having studied my subject *con amore*, took my degrees from your eyes.

Grace. Oh, I see you are a Master of Arts already.

Young Courtly. Unfortunately, no — I shall remain a bachelor — till you can assist me to that honor. (Sir Harcourt *comes down — aside to* Dazzle.) Keep the old boy away.

DAZZLE (*aside*). How do you get on?

YOUNG COURTLY (*aside*). Splendidly!

SIR HARCOURT. Is the conversation strictly confidential? — or might I join?

DAZZLE (*taking his arm*). Oh, not in the least, my dear sir — we were remarking that rifle shooting was an excellent diversion during the summer months.

SIR HARCOURT (*drawing himself up*). Sir, I was addressing —

DAZZLE. And I was saying what a pity it was I couldn't find any one reasonable enough to back his opinion with long odds — come out on the lawn, and pitch up your hat, and I will hold you ten to one I put a bullet into it every time, at forty paces.

SIR HARCOURT. No, sir — I consider you —

MAX. Here, all of you — look, here is Lady Gay Spanker coming across the lawn at a hand gallop!

SIR HARCOURT (*running to the window*). Bless me, the horse is running away!

MAX. Look how she takes that fence! there's a seat.

SIR HARCOURT. Lady Gay Spanker — who may she be?

GRACE. Gay Spanker, Sir Harcourt? My cousin and dearest friend — you *must* like her.

SIR HARCOURT. It will be my devoir, since it is your wish — though it will be a hard task in your presence.

GRACE. I am sure she will like you.

SIR HARCOURT. Ha! ha! I flatter myself.

YOUNG COURTLY. Who, and what is she?

GRACE. Glee, glee made a living thing — Nature in some frolic mood shut up a merry devil in her eye, and, spiting Art, stole joy's brightest harmony to thrill her laugh, which peals out sorrow's knell. Her cry rings loudest in the field — the very echo loves it best, and, as each hill attempts to ape her voice, earth seems to laugh that it made a thing so glad.

MAX. Ay, the merriest minx I ever kissed.

(LADY GAY *laughs without.*)

LADY GAY (*without*). Max!

MAX. Come in, you mischievous puss.

(*Enter* JAMES.)

JAMES. Mr. Adolphus and Lady Gay Spanker.

(*Enter* LADY GAY, *fully equipped in riding habit, etc.*)

LADY GAY. Ha! ha! Well, Governor, how are ye? I have been down five times, climbing up your stairs in my long clothes. How are you, Grace, dear? (*Kisses her.*) There, don't fidget, Max. And there — (*kisses him*) — there's one for you.

SIR HARCOURT. Ahem!

LADY GAY. Oh, gracious, I didn't see you had visitors.

MAX. Permit me to introduce — Sir Harcourt Courtly, Lady Gay Spanker. Mr. Dazzle, Mr. Hamilton — Lady Gay Spanker.

SIR HARCOURT (*aside*). A devilish fine woman!

DAZZLE (*aside to* SIR HARCOURT). She's a devilish fine woman.

LADY GAY. You mustn't think anything of the liberties I take with my old papa here — bless him!

SIR HARCOURT. Oh, no! (*Aside.*) I only thought I should like to be in his place.

LADY GAY. I am so glad you have come, Sir Harcourt. Now we shall be able to make a decent figure at the heels of a hunt.

SIR HARCOURT. Does your ladyship hunt?

LADY GAY. Ha! I say, Governor, does my ladyship hunt? I rather flatter myself that I do hunt! Why, Sir Harcourt, one might as well live without laughing as without hunting. Man was fashioned expressly to fit a horse. Are not hedges and ditches created for leaps? Of course! And I look upon foxes to be one of the most blessed dispensations of a benign Providence.

SIR HARCOURT. Yes, it is all very well in the abstract: I tried it once.

LADY GAY. Once! Only once?

SIR HARCOURT. Once, only once. And then the animal ran away with me.

Lady Gay. Why, you would not have him walk!

Sir Harcourt. Finding my society disagreeable, he instituted a series of kicks, with a view to removing the annoyance; but aided by the united stays of the mane and tail, I frustrated his intentions. His next resource, however, was more effectual, for he succeeded in rubbing me off against a tree.

Max *and* Lady Gay. Ha! ha! ha!

Dazzle. How absurd you must have looked with your legs and arms in the air, like a shipwrecked tea-table.

Sir Harcourt. Sir, I never looked absurd in my life. Ah, it may be very amusing in relation, I dare say, but very unpleasant in effect.

Lady Gay. I pity you, Sir Harcourt: it was criminal in your parents to neglect your education so shamefully.

Sir Harcourt. Possibly; but be assured I shall never break my neck awkwardly from a horse, when it might be accomplished with less trouble from a bedroom window.

Young Courtly (*aside*). My dad will be caught by this she-Bucephalus tamer.

Max. Ah! Sir Harcourt, had you been here a month ago, you would have witnessed the most glorious run that ever swept over merry England's green cheek — a steeple-chase, sir, which I intended to win, but my horse broke down the day before. I had a chance, notwithstanding, and but for Gay here, I should have won. How I regretted my absence from it! How did my filly behave herself, Gay?

Lady Gay. Gloriously, Max! gloriously! There were sixty horses in the field, all mettle to the bone: the start was a picture — away we went in a cloud — pell-mell — helter-skelter — the fools first, as usual, using themselves up — we soon passed them — first your Kitty, then my Blueskin, and Craven's colt last. Then came the tug — Kitty skimmed the walls — Blueskin flew o'er the fences — the Colt neck and neck, and half a mile to run — at last the Colt baulked a leap and went wild. Kitty and I had it all to ourselves — she was three lengths ahead as we breasted the last wall, six feet, if an inch, and a ditch on the other side. Now, for the first time, I gave Blueskin his head — ha! ha! — Away he flew like a thunderbolt — over went the filly — I over the same spot, leaving Kitty in the ditch — walked the steeple, eight miles in thirty minutes, and scarcely turned a hair.

All. Bravo! Bravo!

Lady Gay. Do you hunt?

Dazzle. Hunt! I belong to a hunting family. I was born on horseback and cradled in a kennel! Aye, and I hope I may die with a whoo-whoop!

Max (*to* Sir Harcourt). You must leave your town habits in the smoke of London: here we rise with the lark.

Sir Harcourt. Haven't the remotest conception when that period is.

Grace. The man that misses sunrise loses the sweetest part of his existence.

Sir Harcourt. Oh, pardon me; I have seen sunrise frequently after a ball, or from the window of my travelling carriage, and I always considered it disagreeable.

Grace. I love to watch the first tear that glistens in the opening eye of morning, the silent song the flowers breathe, the thrilly choir of the woodland minstrels, to which the modest brook trickles applause; — these, swelling out the sweetest chord of sweet creation's matins, seem to pour some soft and merry tale into the daylight's ear, as if the waking world had dreamed a happy thing, and now smiled o'er the telling of it.

Sir Harcourt. The effect of a rustic education! Who could ever discover music in a damp foggy morning, except those confounded waits, who never play in tune, and a miserable wretch who makes a point of crying coffee under my window just as I am persuading myself to sleep; in fact, I never heard any music worth listening to, except in Italy.

Lady Gay. No? then you never heard a well-trained English pack, full cry.

Sir Harcourt. Full cry!

Lady Gay. Aye! there is harmony, if you will. Give me the trumpet-neigh; the spotted pack just catching scent

What a chorus is their yelp! The view-hallo, blent with a peal of free and fearless mirth! That's our old English music, — match it where you can.

Sir Harcourt (*aside*). I must see about Lady Gay Spanker.

Dazzle (*aside to* Sir Harcourt). Ah, would you —

Lady Gay. Time then appears as young as love, and plumes as swift a wing. Away we go! The earth flies back to aid our course! Horse, man, hound, earth, heaven! — all — all — one piece of glowing ecstasy! Then I love the world, myself, and every living thing, — a jocund soul cries out for very glee, as it could wish that all creation had but one mouth that I might kiss it!

Sir Harcourt (*aside*). I wish I was the mouth!

Max. Why, we will regenerate you, baronet! But Gay, where is your husband? — Where is Adolphus!

Lady Gay. Bless me, where is my Dolly?

Sir Harcourt. You are married, then?

Lady Gay. I have a husband somewhere, though I can't find him just now. Dolly, dear! (*Aside to* Max.) Governor, at home I always whistle when I want him.

(*Enter* Spanker.)

Spanker. Here I am, — did you call me, Gay?

Sir Harcourt (*eyeing him*). Is that your husband?

Lady Gay (*aside*). Yes, bless his stupid face, that's my Dolly.

Max. Permit me to introduce you to Sir Harcourt Courtly.

Spanker. How d'ye do? I — ah! — um!

(*Appears frightened.*)

Lady Gay. Delighted to have the honor of making the acquaintance of a gentleman so highly celebrated in the world of fashion.

Spanker. Oh, yes, delighted, I'm sure — quite — very, so delighted — delighted!

(*Gets quite confused, draws on his glove, and tears it.*)

Lady Gay. Where have you been Dolly?

Spanker. Oh, ah, I was just outside.

Max. Why did you not come in?

Spanker. I'm sure I didn't — I don't exactly know, but I thought as — perhaps — I can't remember.

Dazzle. Shall we have the pleasure of your company to dinner?

Spanker. I always dine — usually — that is, unless Gay remains.

Lady Gay. Stay dinner, of course; we came on purpose to stop three or four days with you.

Grace. Will you excuse my absence, Gay?

Max. What! what! Where are you going? What takes you away?

Grace. We must postpone the dinner till Gay is dressed.

Max. Oh, never mind, — stay where you are.

Grace. No, I must go.

Max. I say you sha'n't! I will be king in my own house.

Grace. Do, my dear uncle; — you shall be king, and I'll be your prime minister, — that is, I will rule, and you shall have the honor of taking the consequences.

(*Exit.*)

Lady Gay. Well said, Grace; have your own way; it is the only thing we women ought to be allowed.

Max. Come, Gay, dress for dinner.

Sir Harcourt. Permit me, Lady Gay Spanker.

Lady Gay. With pleasure, — what do you want?

Sir Harcourt. To escort you.

Lady Gay. Oh, never mind, I can escort myself, thank you, and Dolly too; — come, dear! (*Exit.*)

Sir Harcourt. Au revoir!

Spanker. Ah, thank you!

(*Exit awkwardly.*)

Sir Harcourt. What an ill-assorted pair!

Max. Not a bit! She married him for freedom, and she has it; he married her for protection, and he has it.

Sir Harcourt. How he ever summoned courage to propose to her, I can't guess.

Max. Bless you, he never did. She proposed to him! She says he would, if he could; but as he couldn't, she did for him. (*Exeunt, laughing.*)

(*Enter* Cool *with a letter.*)

Cool. Mr. Charles, I have been watching to find you alone. Sir Harcourt has written to town for you.

Young Courtly. The devil he has!

Cool. He expects you down to-morrow evening.

Dazzle. Oh! he'll be punctual. A thought strikes me.

Young Courtly. Pooh! Confound your thoughts! I can think of nothing but the idea of leaving Grace, at the very moment when I had established the most —

Dazzle. What if I can prevent her marriage with your Governor?

Young Courtly. Impossible!

Dazzle. He's pluming himself for the conquest of Lady Gay Spanker. It will not be difficult to make him believe she accedes to his suit. And if she would but join in the plan —

Young Courtly. I see it all. And do you think she would?

Dazzle. I mistake my game if she would not.

Cool. Here comes Sir Harcourt!

Dazzle. I'll begin with him. Retire, and watch how I'll open the campaign for you.

(Young Courtly *and* Cool *retire.*)

(*Enter* Sir Harcourt.)

Sir Harcourt. Here is that cursed fellow again.

Dazzle. Ah, my dear old friend!

Sir Harcourt. Mr. Dazzle.

Dazzle. I have a secret of importance to disclose to you. Are you a man of honor? Hush! don't speak; you are. It is with the greatest pain I am compelled to request you, as a gentleman, that you will shun studiously the society of Lady Gay Spanker!

Sir Harcourt. Good gracious! Wherefore, and by what right, do you make such a demand?

Dazzle. Why, I am distantly related to the Spankers.

Sir Harcourt. Why, damme, sir, if you don't appear to be related to every family in Great Britain!

Dazzle. A good many of the nobility claim me as a connection. But, to return — she is much struck with your address; evidently, she laid herself out for display.

Sir Harcourt. Ha! you surprise me!

Dazzle. To entangle you.

Sir Harcourt. Ha! ha! why, it did appear like it.

Dazzle. You will spare her for my sake; give her no encouragement; if disgrace come upon my relatives, the Spankers, I should never hold up my head again.

Sir Harcourt (*aside*). I shall achieve an easy conquest, and a glorious. Ha! ha! I never remarked it before; but this is a gentleman.

Dazzle. May I rely on your generosity?

Sir Harcourt. Faithfully. (*Shakes his hand.*) Sir, I honor and esteem you; but, might I ask, how came you to meet our friend, Max Harkaway, in my house in Belgrave Square?

(*Re-enter* Young Courtly. *Sits on sofa at back.*)

Dazzle. Certainly. I had an acceptance of your son's for one hundred pounds.

Sir Harcourt (*astonished*). Of my son's? Impossible!

Dazzle. Ah, sir, fact! he paid a debt for a poor, unfortunate man — fifteen children — half-a-dozen wives — the devil knows what all.

Sir Harcourt. Simple boy!

Dazzle. Innocent youth, I have no doubt; when you have the hundred convenient, I shall feel delighted.

Sir Harcourt. Oh! follow me to my room, and if you have the document, it will be happiness to me to pay it. Poor Charles! good heart!

Dazzle. Oh, a splendid heart! I dare say. (*Exit* Sir Harcourt.) Come here; write me the bill.

Young Courtly. What for?

Dazzle. What for? why, to release the unfortunate man and his family, to be sure, from jail.

Young Courtly. Who is he?

Dazzle. Yourself.

Young Courtly. But I haven't fifteen children!

Dazzle. Will you take your oath of that?

Young Courtly. Nor four wives.

Dazzle. More shame for you, with all that family. Come, don't be obstinate; write and date it back.

Young Courtly. Ay, but where is the stamp?

Dazzle. Here they are, of all patterns. (*Pulls out a pocketbook.*) I keep them ready drawn in case of necessity, all but the date and acceptance. Now, if you are in an autographic humor, you can try how your signature will look across half a dozen of them; — there — write — exactly — you know the place — across — good — and thank your lucky stars that you have found a friend at last, that gives you money and advice.

(*Takes paper and exit.*)

Young Courtly. Things are approaching to a climax; I must appear *in propria persona* — and immediately — but I must first ascertain what are the real sentiments of this riddle of a woman. Does she love me? I flatter myself. — By Jove, here she comes — I shall never have such an opportunity again!

(*Enter* Grace.)

Grace. I wish I had never seen Mr. Hamilton. Why does every object appear robbed of the charm it once presented to me? Why do I shudder at the contemplation of this marriage, which, till now, was to me a subject of indifference? Am I in love? In love! — if I am, my past life has been the work of raising up a pedestal to place my own folly on — I — the infidel — the railer!

Young Courtly. Meditating upon matrimony, madam?

Grace (*aside*). He little thinks he was the subject of my meditations! (*Aloud.*) No.

Young Courtly (*aside*). I must unmask my battery now.

Grace (*aside*). How foolish I am — he will perceive that I tremble — I must appear at ease. (*A pause.*)

Young Courtly. Eh! ah! um!

Grace. Ah! (*They sink into silence again. Aside.*) How very awkward!

Young Courtly (*aside*). It is a very difficult subject to begin. (*Aloud.*) Madam — ahem — there was — is — I mean — I was about to remark — a — (*Aside.*) Hang me if it is not a very slippery subject. I must brush up my faculties; attack her in her own way. (*Aloud.*) Sing! oh, muse. — (*Aside.*) Why, I have made love before to a hundred women!

Grace (*aside*). I wish I had something to do, for I have nothing to say.

Young Courtly. Madam — there is — a subject so fraught with fate to my future life, that you must pardon my lack of delicacy, should a too hasty expression mar the fervent courtesy of its intent. To you, I feel aware, I must appear in the light of a comparative stranger.

Grace (*aside*). I know what's coming.

Young Courtly. Of you — I know perhaps too much for my own peace.

Grace (*aside*). He *is* in love.

Young Courtly. I forget all that befell before I saw your beauteous self: I seem born into another world — my nature changed — the beams of that bright face falling on my soul, have, from its chaos, warmed into life the flowrets of affection, whose maiden odors now float toward the sun, pouring forth on their pure tongue a mite of adoration, midst the voices of a universe. (*Aside.*) That's something in her own style.

Grace. Mr. Hamilton!

Young Courtly. You cannot feel surprised —

Grace. I am more than surprised. (*Aside.*) I am delighted.

Young Courtly. Do not speak so coldly.

Grace. You have offended me.

Young Courtly. No, madam; no woman, whatever her state, can be offended by the adoration even of the meanest; it is myself whom I have offended and deceived — but still I ask your pardon.

Grace (*aside*). Oh! he thinks I'm refusing him. (*Aloud.*) I am not exactly offended, but —

Young Courtly. Consider my position — a few days — and an insurmountable barrier would have placed you beyond my wildest hopes — you would have been my mother.

Grace. I should have been your mother! (*Aside.*) I thought so.

Young Courtly. No — that is, I meant Sir Harcourt Courtly's bride.

Grace (*with great emphasis*). Never!

Young Courtly. How! never! may I then hope? — you turn away — you would not lacerate me by a refusal?

Grace (*aside*). How stupid he is!

Young Courtly. Still silent! I thank you, Miss Grace — I ought to have expected this — fool that I have been — one course alone remains — farewell!

Grace (*aside*). Now he's going.

Young Courtly. Farewell forever! (*Sits.*) Will you not speak one word? I shall leave this house immediately — I shall not see you again.

Grace. Unhand me, sir, I insist.

Young Courtly (*aside*). Oh! what an ass I've been! (*Rushes up to her, and seizes her hand.*) Release this hand? Never! never! (*Kissing it.*) Never will I quit this hand! it shall be my companion in misery — in solitude — when you are far away.

Grace. Oh! should any one come! (*Drops her handkerchief; he stoops to pick it up.*) For heaven's sake, do not kneel.

Young Courtly (*kneels*). Forever thus prostrate, before my soul's saint, I will lead a pious life of eternal adoration.

Grace. Should we be discovered thus — pray, Mr. Hamilton — pray — pray.

Young Courtly. Pray! I am praying; what more can I do?

Grace. Your conduct is shameful.

Young Courtly. It is. (*Rises.*)

Grace. And if I do not scream, it is not for your sake — that — but it might alarm the family.

Young Courtly. It might — it would. Say, am I wholly indifferent to you? I entreat one word — I implore you — do not withdraw your hand — (*She snatches it away — he puts his round her waist.*) — you smile.

Grace. Leave me, dear Mr. Hamilton!

Young Courtly. Dear! Then I am dear to you; that word once more; say — say you love me!

Grace. Is this fair?

(*He catches her in his arms, and kisses her.*)

(*Enter* Lady Gay Spanker.)

Lady Gay. Ha! oh!

Grace. Gay! destruction! (*Exit.*)

Young Courtly. Fizgig! The devil!

Lady Gay. Don't mind me — pray, don't let me be any interruption!

Young Courtly. I was just —

Lady Gay. Yes, I see you were.

Young Courtly. Oh! madam, how could you mar my bliss, in the very ecstasy of its fulfilment?

Lady Gay. I always like to be in at the death. Never drop your ears; bless you, she is only a little fresh — give her her head, and she will outrun herself.

Young Courtly. Possibly; but what am I to do?

Lady Gay. Keep your seat.

Young Courtly. But in a few days she will take a leap that must throw me — she marries Sir Harcourt Courtly.

Lady Gay. Why, that is awkward, certainly; but you can challenge him, and shoot him.

Young Courtly. Unfortunately, that is out of the question.

Lady Gay. How so?

Young Courtly. You will not betray a secret, if I inform you?

Lady Gay. All right — what is it?

Young Courtly. I am his son.

Lady Gay. What — his son? But does he not know you?

Young Courtly. No. I met him here, by chance, and faced it out. I never saw him before in my life.

Lady Gay. Beautiful! — I see it all —

you're in love with your mother, that should be — your wife, that will be.

Young Courtly. Now, I think I could distance the old gentleman, if you will but lend us your assistance.

Lady Gay. I will, in anything.

Young Courtly. You must know, then, that my father, Sir Harcourt, has fallen desperately in love with you.

Lady Gay. With me! — (*Utters a scream of delight.*) — That is delicious!

Young Courtly. Now, if you only could —

Lady Gay. Could! — I will. Ha! ha! I see my cue. I'll cross his scent — I'll draw him after me. Ho! ho! won't I make love to him? Ha!

Young Courtly. The only objection might be Mr. Spanker, who might —

Lady Gay. No, he mightn't, — he's no objection. Bless him, he's an inestimable little character — you don't know him as well as I do, I dare say — ha! ha! (*Dinner-bell rings.*) Here they come to dinner. I'll commence my operations on your Governor immediately. Ha! ha! how I shall enjoy it!

Young Courtly. Be guarded!

(*Enter* Max Harkaway, Sir Harcourt, Dazzle, Grace, *and* Spanker.)

Max. Now, gentlemen — Sir Harcourt, do you lead Grace.

Lady Gay. I believe Sir Harcourt is engaged to me. (*Takes his arm.*)

Max. Well, please yourselves.

(*They file out*, Max *first*, Young Courtly *and* Grace, Sir Harcourt *coquetting with* Lady Gay, *leaving* Dazzle, *who offers his arm to* Spanker.)

ACT IV.

Scene I. — *A handsome drawing-room in Oak Hall, chandeliers, tables with books, drawings, etc.*

(Grace *and* Lady Gay *discovered. Servant handing coffee.*)

Grace. If there be one habit more abominable than another, it is that of the gentlemen sitting over their wine; it is a selfish, unfeeling fashion, and a gross insult to our sex.

Lady Gay. We are turned out just when the fun begins. How happy the poor wretches look at the contemplation of being rid of us.

Grace. The conventional signal for the ladies to withdraw is anxiously and deliberately waited for.

Lady Gay. Then I begin to wish I were a man.

Grace. The instant the door is closed upon us, there rises a roar!

Lady Gay. In celebration of their short-lived liberty, my love; rejoicing over their emancipation.

Grace. I think it very insulting, whatever it may be.

Lady Gay. Ah! my dear, philosophers say that man is the creature of an hour — it is the dinner hour, I suppose.

(*Loud noise. Cries of* "A song, a song.")

Grace. I am afraid they are getting too pleasant to be agreeable.

Lady Gay. I hope the squire will restrict himself; after his third bottle, he becomes rather voluminous. (*Cries of* "Silence.") Some one is going to sing. (*Jumps up.*) Let us hear!

(Spanker *is heard to sing.*)

Grace. Oh, no, Gay, for heaven's sake!

Lady Gay. Oho! ha! ha! why, that is my Dolly. (*At the conclusion of the verse.*) Well, I never heard my Dolly sing before! Happy wretches, how I envy them!

(*Enter* James, *with a note.*)

James. Mr. Hamilton has just left the house for London.

Grace. Impossible! — that is, without seeing — that is —

Lady Gay. Ha! ha!

Grace. He never — speak, sir!

James. He left, Miss Grace, in a desperate hurry, and this note, I believe, for you. (*Presenting a note on a salver.*)

Grace. For me!

(*She is about to snatch it, but restraining herself, takes it coolly. Exit* James.)

(*Reads.*) "Your manner during dinner has left me no alternative but instant departure; my absence will release you from the oppression which my society must necessarily inflict on your sensitive mind. It may tend also to smother, though it can never extinguish, that indomitable passion, of which I am the passive victim. Dare I supplicate pardon and oblivion for the past? It is the last request of the self-deceived, but still loving

Augustus Hamilton."

(*Puts her hand to her forehead and appears giddy.*)

Lady Gay. Hallo, Grace! what's the matter?

Grace (*recovering herself*). Nothing — the heat of the room.

Lady Gay. Oh! what excuse does he make? particular unforeseen business, I suppose?

Grace. Why, yes — a mere formula — a — a — you may put it in the fire.

(*She puts it in her bosom.*)

Lady Gay (*aside*). It is near enough to the fire where it is.

Grace. I'm glad he's gone.

Lady Gay. So am I.

Grace. He was a disagreeable, ignorant person.

Lady Gay. Yes; and so vulgar.

Grace. No, he was not at all vulgar.

Lady Gay. I mean in appearance.

Grace. Oh! how can you say so; he was very *distingué*.

Lady Gay. Well, I might have been mistaken, but I took him for a forward, intrusive —

Grace. Good gracious, Gay! he was very retiring — even shy.

Lady Gay (*aside*). It's all right. *She* is in love, — blows hot and cold, in the same breath.

Grace. How can you be a competent judge? Why, you have not known him more than a few hours, — while I — I —

Lady Gay. Have known him two days and a quarter! I yield — I confess, I never was, or will be, so intimate with him as you appeared to be! Ha! ha!

(*Loud noise of argument. The folding-doors are thrown open.*)

(*Enter the whole party of gentlemen apparently engaged in warm discussion. They assemble in knots, while the servants hand coffee, etc.,* Max, Sir Harcourt, Dazzle, *and* Spanker, *together.*)

Dazzle. But, my dear sir, consider the position of the two countries under such a constitution.

Sir Harcourt. The two countries! What have they to do with the subject?

Max. Everything. Look at their two legislative bodies.

Spanker. Ay, look at their two legislative bodies.

Sir Harcourt. Why, it would inevitably establish universal anarchy and confusion.

Grace. I think they are pretty well established already.

Spanker. Well, suppose it did, what has anarchy and confusion to do with the subject?

Lady Gay. Do look at my Dolly; he is arguing — talking politics — 'pon my life he is. (*Calling.*) Mr. Spanker, my dear!

Spanker. Excuse me, love, I am discussing a point of importance.

Lady Gay. Oh, that is delicious; he must discuss that to me. — (*She goes up and leads him down; he appears to have shaken off his gaucherie; she shakes her head.*) Dolly! Dolly!

Spanker. Pardon me, Lady Gay Spanker, I conceive your mutilation of my sponsorial appellation derogatory to my *amour propre*.

Lady Gay. Your what? Ho! ho!

Spanker. And I particularly request that, for the future, I may not be treated with that cavalier spirit which does not become your sex, nor your station, your ladyship.

Lady Gay. You have been indulging till you have lost the little wit nature dribbled into your unfortunate little head — your brains want the whipper-in — you are not yourself.

Spanker. Madam, I am doubly myself; and permit me to inform you, that unless you voluntarily pay obedience to my commands, I shall enforce them.

Lady Gay. Your commands!

Spanker. Yes, madam; I mean to put a full stop to your hunting.

Lady Gay. You do! ah! (*Aside.*) I can scarcely speak from delight. (*Aloud.*) Who put such an idea into your head, for I am sure it is not an original emanation of your genius?

Spanker. Sir Harcourt Courtly, my friend; and now, mark me! I request, for your own sake, that I may not be compelled to assert my a — my authority, as your husband. I shall say no more than this — if you persist in this absurd rebellion —

Lady Gay. Well?

Spanker. Contemplate a separation.

(*He looks at her haughtily, and retires.*)

Lady Gay. Now I'm happy! My own little darling, inestimable Dolly, has tumbled into a spirit, somehow. Sir Harcourt, too! Ha! ha! he's trying to make him ill-treat me, so that his own suit may thrive.

Sir Harcourt (*advances*). Lady Gay!

Lady Gay. Now for it.

Sir Harcourt. What hours of misery were those I passed, when, by your secession, the room suffered a total eclipse.

Lady Gay. Ah! you flatter.

Sir Harcourt. No, pardon me, that were impossible. No, believe me, I tried to join in the boisterous mirth, but my thoughts would desert to the drawing-room. Ah! how I envied the careless levity and cool indifference with which Mr. Spanker enjoyed your absence.

Dazzle (*who is lounging in a chair*). Max, that Madeira is worth its weight in gold; I hope you have more of it.

Max. A pipe, I think.

Dazzle. I consider a magnum of that nectar, and a meerschaum of kanaster, to consummate the ultimatum of all mundane bliss. To drown myself in liquid ecstasy, and then blow a cloud on which the enfranchised soul could soar above Olympus. — Oh!

(*Enter* James.)

James. Mr. Charles Courtly!

Sir Harcourt. Ah, now, Max, you must see a living apology for my conduct.

(*Enter* Young Courtly, *dressed very plainly.*)

Well, Charles, how are you? Don't be afraid. There, Max, what do you say now?

Max. Well, this is the most extraordinary likeness.

Grace (*aside*). Yes — considering it is the original. I am not so easily deceived!

Max. Sir, I am delighted to see you.

Young Courtly. Thank you, sir.

Dazzle. Will you be kind enough to introduce me, Sir Harcourt?

Sir Harcourt. This is Mr. Dazzle, Charles.

Young Courtly. Which?

(*Looking from* Mr. Spanker *to* Dazzle.)

Sir Harcourt (*to* Lady Gay). Is not that refreshing? Miss Harkaway — Charles, this is your mother, or rather will be.

Young Courtly. Madam, I shall love, honor, and obey you punctually.

(*Takes out a book, sighs, and goes up reading.*)

(*Enter* James.)

Sir Harcourt. You perceive. Quite unused to society — perfectly ignorant of every conventional rule of life.

James. The Doctor and the young ladies have arrived.

(*Exit.*)

Max. The young ladies — now we must to the ball — I make it a rule always to commence the festivities with a good old country dance — a rattling Sir Roger de Coverly; come, Sir Harcourt.

Sir Harcourt. Does this antiquity require a war-whoop in it?

Max. Nothing but a nimble foot and a light heart.

Sir Harcourt. Very antediluvian indispensables! Lady Gay Spanker, will you honor me by becoming my preceptor?

Lady Gay. Why, I am engaged — but

(*aloud*) on such a plea as Sir Harcourt's, I must waive all obstacles.

Max. Now, Grace, girl — give your hand to Mr. Courtly.

Grace. Pray, excuse me, uncle — I have a headache.

Sir Harcourt (*aside*). Jealousy! by the gods. — Jealous of my devotions at another's fane! (*Aloud.*) Charles, my boy! amuse Miss Grace during our absence.

(*Exit with* Lady Gay.)

Max. But don't you dance, Mr. Courtly!

Young Courtly. Dance, sir! — I never dance — I can procure exercise in a much more rational manner — and music disturbs my meditations.

Max. Well, do the gallant. (*Exit.*)

Young Courtly. I never studied that Art — but I have a Prize Essay on a Hydrostatic subject, which would delight her — for it enchanted the Reverend Doctor Pump, of Corpus Christi.

Grace (*aside*). What on earth could have induced him to disfigure himself in that frightful way! — I rather suspect some plot to entrap me into a confession.

Young Courtly (*aside*). Dare I confess this trick to her? No! Not until I have proved her affection indisputably. — Let me see — I must concoct. (*He takes a chair, and, forgetting his assumed character, is about to take his natural free manner. —* Grace *looks surprised. — He turns abashed.*) Madam, I have been desired to amuse you.

Grace. Thank you.

Young Courtly. "The labor we delight in, physics pain." I will draw you a moral, ahem! Subject, the effects of inebriety! — which, according to Ben Jonson — means perplexion of the intellects, caused by imbibing spirituous liquors. — About an hour before my arrival, I passed an appalling evidence of the effects of this state — a carriage was overthrown — horses killed — gentleman in a helpless state, with his neck broken — all occasioned by the intoxication of the post-boy.

Grace. That is very amusing.

Young Courtly. I found it edifying — nutritious food for reflection — the expiring man desired his best compliments to you.

Grace. To me —

Young Courtly. Yes.

Grace. His name was —

Young Courtly. Mr. Augustus Hamilton.

Grace. Augustus! Oh!

(*Affects to faint.*)

Young Courtly (*aside*). Huzza!

Grace. But where, sir, did this happen?

Young Courtly. About four miles down the road.

Grace. He must be conveyed here.

(*Enter servant.*)

Servant. Mr. Meddle, madam.

(*Enter* Meddle.)

Meddle. On very particular business.

Grace. The very person. My dear sir!

Meddle. My dear madam!

Grace. You must execute a very particular commission for me immediately. Mr. Hamilton has met with a frightful accident on the London road, and is in a dying state.

Meddle. Well! I have no hesitation in saying, he takes it uncommonly easy — he looks as if he was used to it.

Grace. You mistake: that is not Mr. Hamilton, but Mr. Courtly, who will explain everything, and conduct you to the spot.

Young Courtly (*aside*). Oh! I must put a stop to all this, or I shall be found out. — (*Aloud.*) Madam, that were useless; for I omitted to mention a small fact which occurred before I left Mr. Hamilton — he died.

Grace. Dear me! Oh, then we needn't trouble you, Mr. Meddle. Hark! I hear they are commencing a waltz — if you will ask me — perhaps your society and conversation may tend to dispel the dreadful sensation you have aroused.

Young Courtly (*aside*). Hears of my death — screams out — and then asks me to waltz! I am bewildered! Can she suspect me? I wonder which she likes best — me or my double? Confound this disguise — I must retain it — I have gone too far with my dad to pull up now. — At your service, madam.

Grace (*aside*). I will pay him well for this trick!

(*Exeunt.*)

Meddle. Well, if that is not Mr. Hamilton, scratch me out with a big blade, for I am a blot — a mistake upon the rolls. There is an error in the pleadings somewhere, and I will discover it. — I would swear to his identity before the most discriminating jury. By the bye, this accident will form a capital excuse for my presence here. I just stepped in to see how matters worked, and — stay — here comes the bridegroom elect — and, oh! in his very arms, Lady Gay Spanker! (*Looks round.*) Where are my witnesses? Oh, that some one else were here! However, I can retire and get some information, eh — Spanker versus Courtly — damages — witness.

(*Gets into an arm-chair, which he turns round.*)

(*Enter* Sir Harcourt, *supporting* Lady Gay.)

Sir Harcourt. This cool room will recover you.

Lady Gay. Excuse my trusting to you for support.

Sir Harcourt. I am transported! Allow me thus ever to support this lovely burden, and I shall conceive that Paradise is regained.

(*They sit.*)

Lady Gay. Oh! Sir Harcourt, I feel very faint.

Sir Harcourt. The waltz made you giddy.

Lady Gay. And I have left my salts in the other room.

Sir Harcourt. I always carry a flacon, for the express accommodation of the fair sex.

(*Producing a smelling-bottle.*)

Lady Gay. Thank you — ah!

(*She sighs.*)

Sir Harcourt. What a sigh was there!

Lady Gay. The vapor of consuming grief.

Sir Harcourt. Grief? Is it possible, have you a grief? Are you unhappy? Dear me!

Lady Gay. Am I not married?

Sir Harcourt. What a horrible state of existence!

Lady Gay. I am never contradicted, so there are none of those enlivening, interest[ing] little differences, which so pleasingly diversify the monotony of conjugal life, like spots of verdure — no quarrels, like oases in the desert of matrimony — no rows.

Sir Harcourt. How vulgar! what a brute!

Lady Gay. I never have anything but my own way; and he won't permit me to spend more than I like.

Sir Harcourt. Mean-spirited wretch!

Lady Gay. How can I help being miserable?

Sir Harcourt. Miserable! I wonder you are not in a lunatic asylum, with such unheard-of barbarism!

Lady Gay. But worse than all that!

Sir Harcourt. Can it be out-heroded?

Lady Gay. Yes, I could forgive that — I do — it is my duty. But only imagine — picture to yourself, my dear Sir Harcourt, though I, the third daughter of an Earl, married him out of pity for his destitute and helpless situation as a bachelor with ten thousand a year — conceive, if you can — he actually permits me, with the most placid indifference, to flirt with any old fool I may meet.

Sir Harcourt. Good gracious! miserable idiot!

Lady Gay. I fear there is an incompatibility of temper, which renders a separation inevitable.

Sir Harcourt. Indispensable, my dear madam! Ah! had I been the happy possessor of such a realm of bliss — what a beatific eternity unfolds itself to my extending imagination! Had another man but looked at you, I should have annihilated him at once; and if he had the temerity to speak, his life alone could have expiated his crime.

Lady Gay. Oh, an existence of such a

nature is too bright for the eye of thought — too sweet to bear reflection.

Sir Harcourt. My devotion, eternal, deep —

Lady Gay. Oh, Sir Harcourt!

Sir Harcourt (*more fervently*). Your every thought should be a separate study, — each wish forestalled by the quick apprehension of a kindred soul.

Lady Gay. Alas! how can I avoid my fate?

Sir Harcourt. If a life — a heart — were offered to your astonished view by one who is considered the index of fashion — the vane of the *beau monde*, — if you saw him at your feet, begging, beseeching your acceptance of all, and more than this, what would your answer —

Lady Gay. Ah! I know of none so devoted!

Sir Harcourt. You do! (*Throwing himself upon his knees.*) Behold Sir Harcourt Courtly!

(Meddle *jumps up in the chair.*)

Lady Gay (*aside*). Ha! ha! Yoicks! Puss has broken cover.

Sir Harcourt. Speak, adored, dearest Lady Gay! — speak — will you fly from the tyranny, the wretched misery of such a monster's roof, and accept the soul which lives but in your presence!

Lady Gay. Do not press me. Oh, spare a weak, yielding woman, — be contented to know that you are, alas! too dear to me. But the world — the world would say —

Sir Harcourt. Let us be a precedent, to open a more extended and liberal view of matrimonial advantages to society.

Lady Gay. How irresistible is your argument! Oh! pause!

Sir Harcourt. I have ascertained for a fact, every tradesman of mine lives with his wife, and thus you see it has become a vulgar and plebeian custom.

Lady Gay. Leave me; I feel I cannot withstand your powers of persuasion. Swear that you will never forsake me.

Sir Harcourt. Dictate the oath. May I grow wrinkled, — may two inches be added to the circumference of my waist, — may I lose the fall in my back, — may I be old and ugly the instant I forego one tithe of adoration!

Lady Gay. I must believe you.

Sir Harcourt. Shall we leave this detestable spot — this horrible vicinity?

Lady Gay. The sooner the better; tomorrow evening let it be. Now let me return; my absence will be remarked. (*He kisses her hand.*) Do I appear confused? Has my agitation rendered me unfit to enter the room?

Sir Harcourt. More angelic by a lovely tinge of heightened color.

Lady Gay. To-morrow, in this room, which opens on the lawn.

Sir Harcourt. At eleven o'clock.

Lady Gay. Have your carriage in waiting, and four horses. Remember please, be particular to have four; don't let the affair come off shabbily. Adieu, dear Sir Harcourt! (*Exit.*)

Sir Harcourt. Veni, vidi, vici! Hannibal, Cæsar, Napoleon, Alexander never completed so fair a conquest in so short a time. She dropped fascinated. This is an unprecedented example of the irresistible force of personal appearance combined with polished address. Poor creature! how she loves me! I pity so prostrating a passion, and ought to return it. I will; it is a duty I owe to society and fashion.

(*Exit.*)

Meddle (*turns the chair round*). "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." This is my tide — I am the only witness. "Virtue is sure to find its own reward." But I've no time to contemplate what I shall be — something huge. Let me see — Spanker *versus* Courtly — Crim. Con. — Damages placed at 150,000*l.*, at least, for juries always decimate your hopes.

(*Enter* Mr. Spanker.)

Spanker. I cannot find Gay anywhere.

Meddle. The plaintiff himself — I must commence the action. Mr. Spanker, as I have information of deep, vital importance to impart, will you take a seat? (*They sit solemnly.* [Meddle] *takes out a* *note-book and pencil.)* Ahem! You have a wife?

(*Re-enter* Lady Gay, *behind.*)

Spanker. Yes, I believe I —

Meddle. Will you be kind enough, without any prevarication, to answer my questions?

Spanker. You alarm — I —

Meddle. Compose yourself and reserve your feelings; take time to consider. You have a wife?

Spanker. Yes —

Meddle. He has a wife — good — a *bona-fide* wife — bound morally and legally to be your wife, and nobody else's in effect, except on your written permission —

Spanker. But what has this —

Meddle. Hush! allow me, my dear sir, to congratulate you. (*Shakes his hand.*)

Spanker. What for?

Meddle. Lady Gay Spanker is about to dishonor the bond of wedlock by eloping from you.

Spanker (*starting*). What!

Meddle. Be patient — I thought you would be overjoyed. Will you place the affair in my hands, and I will venture to promise the largest damages on record.

Spanker. Damn the damages! I want my wife. Oh, I'll go and ask her not to run away. She may run away with me — she may hunt — she may ride — anything she likes. Oh, sir, let us put a stop to this affair.

Meddle. Put a stop to it! do not alarm me, sir. Sir, you will spoil the most exquisite brief that was ever penned. It must proceed — it shall proceed. It is illegal to prevent it, and I will bring an action against you for wilful intent to injure the profession.

Spanker. Oh, what an ass I am! Oh, I have driven her to this. It was all that damned brandy punch on the top of Burgundy. What a fool I was!

Meddle. It was the happiest moment of your life.

Spanker. So I thought at the time; but we live to grow wiser. Tell me, who is the vile seducer?

Meddle. Sir Harcourt Courtly.

Spanker. Ha! he is my best friend.

Meddle. I should think he is. If you will accompany me — here is a verbatim copy of the whole transaction in short-hand — sworn to by me.

Spanker. Only let me have Gay back again.

Meddle. Even that may be arranged — this way.

Spanker. That ever I should live to see my wife run away. Oh, I will do anything — keep two packs of hounds — buy up every horse and ass in England — myself included — oh!

(*Exit with* Meddle.)

Lady Gay. Ha! ha! ha! Poor Dolly, I'm sorry I must continue to deceive him. If he would kindle up a little — so that fellow overheard all — well, so much the better.

(*Enter* Young Courtly.)

Young Courtly. My dear madam, how fares the plot? does my Governor nibble?

Lady Gay. Nibble! he is caught, and in the basket. I have just left him with a hook in his gills, panting for very lack of element. But how goes on your encounter?

Young Courtly. Bravely. By a simple ruse, I have discovered that she loves me. I see but one chance against the best termination I could hope.

Lady Gay. What is that?

Young Courtly. My father has told me that I return to town again to-morrow afternoon.

Lady Gay. Well, I insist you stop and dine — keep out of the way.

Young Courtly. Oh, but what excuse can I offer for disobedience? What can I say when he sees me before dinner?

Lady Gay. Say — say Grace.

(*Enter* Grace, *who gets behind the window curtains.*)

Young Courtly. Ha! ha!

Lady Gay. I have arranged to elope with Sir Harcourt myself to-morrow night.

Young Courtly. The deuce you have!

Lady Gay. Now if you could persuade

Grace to follow that example — his carriage will be waiting at the Park — be there a little before eleven — and it will just prevent our escape. Can you make her agree to that?

Young Courtly. Oh, without the slightest difficulty, if Mr. Augustus Hamilton supplicates.

Lady Gay. Success attend you. (*Going.*)

Young Courtly. I will bend the haughty Grace. (*Going.*)

Lady Gay. Do. (*Exeunt severally.*)

Grace. Will you?

ACT V.

Scene I. — *A drawing-room in Oak Hall.*

(*Enter* Cool.)

Cool. This is the most serious affair Sir Harcourt has ever been engaged in. I took the liberty of considering him a fool when he told me he was going to marry: but voluntarily to incur another man's incumbrance is very little short of madness. If he continues to conduct himself in this absurd manner, I shall be compelled to dismiss him.

(*Enter* Sir Harcourt, *equipped for travelling.*)

Sir Harcourt. Cool!

Cool. Sir Harcourt.

Sir Harcourt. Is my chariot in waiting?

Cool. For the last half hour at the park wicket. But, pardon the insinuation, sir; would it not be more advisable to hesitate a little for a short reflection before you undertake the heavy responsibility of a woman?

Sir Harcourt. No: hesitation destroys the romance of [a] *faux pas*, and reduces it to the level of a mere mercantile calculation.

Cool. What is to be done with Mr. Charles?

Sir Harcourt. Ay, much against my will, Lady Gay prevailed on me to permit him to remain. You, Cool, must return him to college. Pass through London, and deliver these papers: here is a small notice of the coming elopement for the *Morning Post;* this, by an eye-witness, for the *Herald;* this, with all the particulars, for the *Chronicle;* and the full and circumstantial account for the evening journals — after which, meet us at Boulogne.

Cool. Very good, Sir Harcourt. (*Going.*)

Sir Harcourt. Lose no time. Remember — Hotel Anglais, Boulogne-sur-Mer. And, Cool, bring a few copies with you, and don't forget to distribute some amongst very particular friends.

Cool. It shall be done. (*Exit* Cool.)

Sir Harcourt. With what indifference does a man of the world view the approach of the most perilous catastrophe! My position, hazardous as it is, entails none of that nervous excitement which a neophyte in the school of fashion would feel. I am as cool and steady as possible. Habit, habit! Oh! how many roses will fade upon the cheek of beauty, when the defalcation of Sir Harcourt Courtly is whispered — then hinted — at last, confirmed and bruited. I think I see them. Then, on my return, they will not dare to eject me — I am their sovereign! Whoever attempts to think of treason, I'll banish him from the West End — I'll cut him — I'll put him out of fashion!

(*Enter* Lady Gay.)

Lady Gay. Sir Harcourt!

Sir Harcourt. At your feet.

Lady Gay. I had hoped you would have repented.

Sir Harcourt. Repented!

Lady Gay. Have you not come to say it was a jest? — say you have!

Sir Harcourt. Love is too sacred a subject to be trifled with. Come, let us fly! See, I have procured disguises —

Lady Gay. My courage begins to fail me. Let me return.

Sir Harcourt. Impossible!

Lady Gay. Where do you intend to take me?

Sir Harcourt. You shall be my guide. The carriage waits.

Lady Gay. You will never desert me?

Sir Harcourt. Desert! Oh, heavens!

Nay, do not hesitate — flight, now, alone is left to your desperate situation! Come, every moment is laden with danger.

(*They are going.*)

Lady Gay. Oh! gracious!

Sir Harcourt. Hush! what is it?

Lady Gay. I have forgotten — I must return.

Sir Harcourt. Impossible!

Lady Gay. I must! I must! I have left Max — a pet staghound, in his basket — without whom, life would be unendurable — I could not exist!

Sir Harcourt. No, no. Let him be sent after us in a hamper.

Lady Gay. In a hamper! Remorseless man! Go — you love me not. How would you like to be sent after me — in a hamper? Let me fetch him. Hark! I hear him squeal! Oh! Max — Max!

Sir Harcourt. Hush! for heaven's sake. They'll imagine you're calling the Squire. I hear footsteps; where can I retire?

(*Enter* Meddle, Spanker, Dazzle, *and* Max. Lady Gay *screams.*)

Meddle. Spanker *versus* Courtly! — I subpœna every one of you as witnesses! — I have 'em ready — here they are — shilling a-piece. (*Giving them round.*)

Lady Gay. Where is Sir Harcourt?

Meddle. There! — bear witness! — calling on the vile delinquent for protection!

Spanker. Oh! his protection!

Lady Gay. What? ha!

Meddle. I'll swear I overheard the whole elopement planned — before any jury! — where's the book?

Spanker. Do you hear, you profligate?

Lady Gay. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Dazzle. But where is this wretched Lothario?

Meddle. Aye, where is the defendant?

Spanker. Where lies the hoary villain?

Lady Gay. What villain?

Spanker. That will not serve you! — I'll not be blinded that way!

Meddle. We won't be blinded any way!

Max. I must seek Sir Harcourt, and demand an explanation! — Such a thing never occurred in Oak Hall before! — It must be cleared up!

(*Exit.*)

Meddle (*aside to* Spanker). Now, take my advice, remember your gender. Mind the notes I have given you.

Spanker (*aside*). All right! Here they are! Now, madam, I have procured the highest legal opinion on this point.

Meddle. Hear! hear!

Spanker. And the question resolves itself into a — into — What's this?

(*Looks at notes.*)

Meddle. A nutshell!

Spanker. Yes, we are in a nutshell. Will you, in every respect, subscribe to my requests — desires — commands — (*looks at notes*) — orders — imperative — indicative — injunctive — or otherwise?

Lady Gay [*aside*]. 'Pon my life, he's actually going to assume the ribbons, and take the box-seat. I must put a stop to this I will! It will all end in smoke. I know Sir Harcourt would rather run than fight!

Dazzle. Oh! I smell powder! — command my services. My dear madam, can I be of any use?

Spanker. Oh! [a] challenge! — I must consult my legal adviser.

Meddle. No! — impossible!

Dazzle. Pooh! the easiest thing in life! — Leave it to me — what has an attorney to do with affairs of honor? — they are out of his element!

Meddle. Compromise the question! — pull his nose! — we have no objection to that!

Dazzle (*turning to* Lady Gay). Well, we have no objection either — have we?

Lady Gay. No! — pull his nose — that will be something.

Meddle. And, moreover, it is not exactly actionable!

Dazzle. Isn't it! — thank you — I'll note down that piece of information — it may be useful.

Meddle. How! cheated out of my legal knowledge.

Lady Gay. Mr. Spanker, I am determined! — I insist upon a challenge being sent to Sir Harcourt Courtly! — and — mark me — if you refuse to fight him — I will.

Meddle. Don't. Take my advice — you'll incapacit —

Lady Gay. Look you, Mr. Meddle, unless you wish me to horsewhip you, hold your tongue.

Meddle. What a she-tiger — I shall retire and collect my costs.

(*Exit.*)

Lady Gay. Mr. Spanker, oblige me, by writing as I dictate.

Spanker. He's gone — and now I am defenceless! Is this the fate of husbands? — A duel! — Is this the result of becoming master of my own family?

Lady Gay. "Sir, the situation in which you were discovered with my wife, admits neither of explanation nor apology."

Spanker. Oh, yes! but it does — I don't believe you really intended to run quite away.

Lady Gay. You do not; but I know better, I say I did; and if it had not been for your unfortunate interruption, I do not know where I might have been by this time. — Go on.

Spanker. "Nor apology." I'm writing my own death-warrant, committing suicide on compulsion.

Lady Gay. "The bearer will arrange all preliminary matters, for another day must see this sacrilege expiated by your life, or that of

"Yours very sincerely,
"Dolly Spanker."

Now, Mr. Dazzle. (*Gives it over his head.*)

Dazzle. The document is as sacred as if it were a hundred-pound bill.

Lady Gay. We trust to your discretion.

Spanker. His discretion! Oh, put your head in a tiger's mouth, and trust to his discretion!

Dazzle (*sealing letter, etc., with* Spanker's *seal*). My dear Lady Gay, matters of this kind are indigenous to my nature, independently of their pervading fascination to all humanity; but this is more especially delightful, as you may perceive I shall be the intimate and bosom friend of both parties.

Lady Gay. Is it not the only alternative in such a case?

Dazzle. It is a beautiful panacea in any, in every case. (*Going — returns.*) By the way, where would you like this party of pleasure to come off? Open air shooting is pleasant enough, but if I might venture to advise, we could order half a dozen of that Madeira and a box of cigars into the billiard-room, so make a night of it; take up the irons every now and then, string for first shot, and blaze away at one another in an amicable and gentlemanlike way; so conclude the matter before the potency of the liquor could disturb the individuality of the object, or the smoke of the cigars render its outline dubious. Does such an arrangement coincide with your views?

Lady Gay. Perfectly.

Dazzle. I trust shortly to be the harbinger of happy tidings. (*Exit.*)

Spanker (*coming forward*). Lady Gay Spanker, are you ambitious of becoming a widow?

Lady Gay. Why, Dolly, woman is at best but weak, and weeds become me.

Spanker. Female! am I to be immolated on the altar of your vanity?

Lady Gay. If you become pathetic, I shall laugh.

Spanker. Farewell — base, heartless, unfeeling woman! (*Exit.*)

Lady Gay. Ha! well, so I am. I am heartless, for he is a dear, good little fellow, and I ought not to play upon his feelings; but 'pon my life he sounds so well up at concert pitch, that I feel disinclined to untune him. Poor Dolly, I didn't think he cared so much about me. I will put him out of pain.

(*Exit.* Sir Harcourt *comes down.*)

Sir Harcourt. I have been a fool! a dupe of my own vanity. I shall be pointed at as a ridiculous old coxcomb — and so I am. The hour of conviction is *arrived*. Have I deceived myself? — Have I turned all my senses inwards — looking towards self — always self? — and has the world been ever laughing at me? Well, if they have, I will revert the joke; — they may say I am an old ass; but I will prove that I am neither too old to repent my folly, nor such an ass as to flinch from confessing it. A blow half met is but half felt.

(*Enter* Dazzle.)

Dazzle. Sir Harcourt, may I be permitted the honor of a few minutes' conversation with you?

Sir Harcourt. With pleasure.

Dazzle. Have the kindness to throw your eye over that. (*Gives the letter.*)

Sir Harcourt (*reads*). "Situation — my wife — apology — expiate — my life." Why, this is intended for a challenge.

Dazzle. Why, indeed, I am perfectly aware that it is not quite *en règle* in the couching, for with that I had nothing to do; but I trust that the irregularity of the composition will be confounded in the beauty of the subject.

Sir Harcourt. Mr. Dazzle, are you in earnest?

Dazzle. Sir Harcourt Courtly, upon my honor I am, and I hope that no previous engagement will interfere with an immediate reply *in propria persona.* We have fixed upon the billiard-room as the scene of action, which I have just seen properly illuminated in honor of the occasion; and, by-the-bye, if your implements are not handy, I can oblige you with a pair of the sweetest things you ever handled — hair-triggered — saw grip; heirlooms in my family. I regard them almost in the light of relations.

Sir Harcourt. Sir, I shall avail myself of one of your relatives. [*Aside.*] One of the hereditaments of my folly — I must accept it. [*Aloud.*] Sir, I shall be happy to meet Mr. Spanker at any time or place he may appoint.

Dazzle. The sooner the better, sir. Allow me to offer you my arm. I see you understand these matters; — my friend Spanker is woefully ignorant — miserably uneducated. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Re-enter* Max, *with* Grace.)

Max. Give ye joy, girl, give ye joy. Sir Harcourt Courtly must consent to waive all title to your hand in favor of his son Charles.

Grace. Oh, indeed! Is that the pith of your congratulation — humph! the exchange of an old fool for a young one? Pardon me if I am not able to distinguish the advantage.

Max. Advantage!

Grace. Moreover, by what right am I a transferable cipher in the family of Courtly? So, then, my fate is reduced to this, to sacrifice my fortune, or unite myself with a worm-eaten edition of the Classics!

Max. Why, he certainly is not such a fellow as I could have chosen for my little Grace; but consider, to retain fifteen thousand a-year! Now, tell me honestly — but why should I say *honestly?* Speak, girl, would you rather not have the lad?

Grace. Why do you ask me?

Max. Why, look ye, I'm an old fellow, another hunting season or two, and I shall be in at my own death — I can't leave you this house and land, because they are entailed, nor can I say I'm sorry for it, for it is a good law; but I have a little box with my Grace's name upon it, where, since your father's death and miserly will, I have yearly placed a certain sum to be yours, should you refuse to fulfil the conditions prescribed.

Grace. My own dear uncle!
(*Clasping him round the neck.*)

Max. Pooh! pooh! what's to do now? Why, it was only a trifle — why, you little rogue, what are you crying about?

Grace. Nothing, but —

Max. But what? Come, out with it, will you have young Courtly?

(*Re-enter* Lady Gay.)

Lady Gay. Oh! Max, Max!

Max. Why, what's amiss with you?

Lady Gay. I'm a wicked woman!

Max. What have you done?

Lady Gay. Everything — oh, I thought Sir Harcourt was a coward, but now I find a man may be a coxcomb without being a poltroon. Just to show my husband how inconvenient it is to hold the ribands sometimes, I made him send a challenge to the old fellow, and he, to my surprise, accepted it, and is going to blow my Dolly's brains out in the billiard-room.

Max. The devil!

Lady Gay. Just when I imagined I had got my whip hand of him again, out comes my linch-pin — and over I go — oh!

Max. I will soon put a stop to that — a duel under my roof! Murder in Oak Hall! I'll shoot them both! (*Exit.*)

Grace. Are you really in earnest?

Lady Gay. Do you think it [looks] like a joke? Oh! Dolly, if you allow yourself to be shot, I will never forgive you — never! Ah, he is a great fool, Grace; but I can't tell why, but I would sooner lose my bridle hand than he should be hurt on my account.

(*Enter* Sir Harcourt Courtly.)

Tell me — tell me — have you shot him — is he dead — my dear Sir Harcourt — you horrid old brute — have you killed him? I shall never forgive myself. (*Exit.*)

Grace. Oh! Sir Harcourt, what has happened?

Sir Harcourt. Don't be alarmed, I beg — your uncle interrupted us — discharged the weapons — locked the challenger up in the billiard-room to cool his rage.

Grace. Thank heaven!

Sir Harcourt. Miss Grace, to apologize for my conduct were useless, more especially as I am confident that no feelings of indignation or sorrow for my late acts are cherished by you; but still, reparation is in my power, and I not only waive all title, right, or claim to your person or your fortune, but freely admit your power to bestow them on a more worthy object.

Grace. This generosity, Sir Harcourt, is most unexpected.

Sir Harcourt. No, not generosity, but simply justice, justice!

Grace. May I still beg a favor?

Sir Harcourt. Claim anything that is mine to grant.

Grace. You have been duped by Lady Gay Spanker, I have also been cheated and played upon by her and Mr. Hamilton — may I beg that the contract between us may, to all appearances, be still held good?

Sir Harcourt. Certainly, although I confess I cannot see the point of your purpose.

(*Enter* Max, *with* Young Courtly.)

Max. Now, Grace, I have brought the lad.

Grace. Thank you, uncle, but the trouble was quite unnecessary — Sir Harcourt holds to his original contract.

Max. The deuce he does!

Grace. And I am willing — nay, eager, to become Lady Courtly.

Young Courtly (*aside*). The deuce you are!

Max. But, Sir Harcourt —

Sir Harcourt. One word, Max, for an instant. (*They retire.*)

Young Courtly (*aside*). What can this mean? Can it be possible that I have been mistaken — that she is not in love with Augustus Hamilton?

Grace. Now we shall find how he intends to bend the haughty Grace.

Young Courtly. Madam — Miss, I mean, — are you really in earnest — are you in love with my father?

Grace. No, indeed I am not.

Young Courtly. Are you in love with any one else?

Grace. No, or I should not marry him.

Young Courtly. Then you actually accept him as your real husband?

Grace. In the common acceptation of the word.

Young Courtly (*aside*). Hang me if I have not been a pretty fool! (*Aloud.*) Why do you marry him, if you don't care about him?

Grace. To save my fortune.

Young Courtly (*aside*). Mercenary, cold-hearted girl! (*Aloud.*) But if there be any one you love in the least — marry him; — were you never in love?

Grace. Never!

Young Courtly (*aside*). Oh! what an ass I've been! (*Aloud.*) I heard Lady Gay mention something about a Mr. Hamilton.

Grace. Ah, yes, a person who, after an

acquaintanceship of two days, had the assurance to make love to me, and I —

Young Courtly. Yes, — you — Well?

Grace. I pretended to receive his attentions.

Young Courtly (*aside*). It was the best pretence I ever saw.

Grace. An absurd, vain, conceited coxcomb, who appeared to imagine that I was so struck with his fulsome speech, that he could turn me round his finger.

Young Courtly (*aside*). My very thoughts!

Grace. But he was mistaken.

Young Courtly (*aside*). Confoundedly! (*Aloud.*) Yet you seemed rather concerned about the news of his death?

Grace. His accident! No, but —

Young Courtly. But what?

Grace (*aside*). What can I say? (*Aloud.*) Ah! but my maid Pert's brother is a post-boy, and I thought he might have sustained an injury, poor boy.

Young Courtly (*aside*). Damn the post-boy! (*Aloud.*) Madam, if the retention of your fortune be the plea on which you are about to bestow your hand on one you do not love, and whose very actions speak his carelessness for that inestimable jewel he is incapable of appreciating — Know that I am devotedly, madly attached to you.

Grace. You, sir? Impossible!

Young Courtly. Not at all, — but inevitable, — I have been so for a long time.

Grace. Why, you never saw me until last night.

Young Courtly. I have seen you in imagination — you are the ideal I have worshipped.

Grace. Since you press me into a confession, — which nothing but this could bring me to speak, — know, I did love poor Augustus Hamilton —

(*Re-enter* Max *and* Sir Harcourt.)

but he — he is — no — more! Pray, spare me, sir.

Young Courtly (*aside*). She loves me! And, oh! what a situation I am in! — if I own I am the man, my Governor will overhear, and ruin me — if I do not, she'll marry him. — What is to be done?

(*Enter* Lady Gay.)

Lady Gay. Where have you put my Dolly? I have been racing all round the house — tell me, is he quite dead!

Max. I'll have him brought in. (*Exit.*)

Sir Harcourt. My dear madam, you must perceive this unfortunate occurrence was no fault of mine. I was compelled to act as I have done — I was willing to offer any apology, but that resource was excluded, as unacceptable.

Lady Gay. I know — I know — 'twas I made him write that letter — there was no apology required — 'twas I that apparently seduced you from the paths of propriety, — 'twas all a joke, and here is the end of it.

(*Enter* Max, Mr. Spanker, *and* Dazzle.)

Oh! if he had but lived to say, "I forgive you, Gay!"

Spanker. So I do!

Lady Gay (*seeing* Spanker). Ah! he is alive!

Spanker. Of course I am!

Lady Gay. Ha! ha! ha! (*Embraces him.*) I will never hunt again — unless you wish it. Sell your stable —

Spanker. No, no — do what you like — say what you like, for the future! I find the head of a family has less ease and more responsibility than I, as a member, could have anticipated. I abdicate!

(*Enter* Cool.)

Sir Harcourt. Ah! Cool, here! (*Aside.*) You may destroy those papers — I have altered my mind, — and I do not intend to elope at present. Where are they?

Cool. As you seemed particular, Sir Harcourt, I sent them off by mail to London.

Sir Harcourt. Why, then, a full description of the whole affair will be published to-morrow.

Cool. Most irretrievably!

Sir Harcourt. You must post to town immediately, and stop the press.

Cool. Beg pardon — they would see me hanged first, Sir Harcourt; they don't frequently meet with such a profitable lie.

Servant (*without*). No, sir! no, sir!

(*Enter* Simpson.)

Simpson. Sir, there is a gentleman, who calls himself Mr. Solomon Isaacs, insists upon following me up.

(*Enter* Mr. Solomon Isaacs.)

Isaacs. Mr. Courtly, you will excuse my performance of a most disagreeable duty at any time, but more especially in such a manner. I must beg the honor of your company to town.

Sir Harcourt. What! — how! — what for?

Isaacs. For debt, Sir Harcourt.

Sir Harcourt. Arrested? — impossible! Here must be some mistake.

Isaacs. Not the slightest, sir. Judgment has been given in five cases, for the last three months; but Mr. Courtly is an eel, rather too nimble for my men. — We have been on his track, and traced him down to this village, with Mr. Dazzle.

Dazzle. Ah! Isaacs! how are you?

Isaacs. Thank you, sir.

(*Speaks to* Sir Harcourt.)

Max. Do you know him?

Dazzle. Oh, intimately — distantly related to his family — same arms on our escutcheon — empty purse falling through a hole in a — pocket: motto, "Requiescat in pace" — which means, "Let virtue be its own reward."

Sir Harcourt (*to* Isaacs). Oh, I thought there was a mistake! Know, to your misfortune, that Mr. Hamilton was the person you dogged to Oak Hall, between whom and my son a most remarkable likeness exists.

Isaacs. Ha! ha! Know, to your misfortune, Sir Harcourt, that Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Courtly are one and the same person!

Sir Harcourt. Charles!

Young Courtly. Concealment is in vain — I am Augustus Hamilton.

Sir Harcourt. Hang me, if I didn't think it all along! Oh, you infernal, cozening dog!

Isaacs. Now, then, Mr. Hamilton —

Grace. Stay, sir — Mr. Charles Courtly is under age — ask his father.

Sir Harcourt. Ahem! — I won't — I won't pay a shilling of the rascal's debts — not a sixpence!

Grace. Then, I will — you may retire.

(*Exit* Isaacs.)

Young Courtly. I can now perceive the generous point of your conduct towards me; and, believe me, I appreciate, and will endeavor to deserve it.

Max. Ha! ha! Come, Sir Harcourt, you have been fairly beaten — you must forgive him — say you will.

Sir Harcourt. So, sir, it appears you have been leading, covertly, an infernal town life.

Young Courtly. Yes, please, father.

(*Imitating* Master Charles.)

Sir Harcourt. None of your humbug sir! (*Aside.*) He is my own son — how could I expect him to keep out of the fire? (*Aloud.*) And you, Mr. Cool! — have you been deceiving me?

Cool. Oh! Sir Harcourt, if your perception was played upon, how could I be expected to see?

Sir Harcourt. Well, it would be useless to withhold my hand. There, boy! (*He gives his hand to* Young Courtly. Grace *comes down on the other side, and offers her hand; he takes it.*) What is all this? What do you want?

Young Courtly. Your blessing, father.

Grace. If you please, father.

Sir Harcourt. Oho! the mystery is being solved. So, so, you young scoundrel, you have been making love — under the rose.

Lady Gay. He learnt that from you, Sir Harcourt.

Sir Harcourt. Ahem! What would you do now, if I were to withhold my consent?

Grace. *Do* without it.

Max. The will says, if Grace marries any one but you, — her property reverts to your heir-apparent — and there he stands.

Lady Gay. Make a virtue of necessity.

Spanker. I married from inclination; and see how happy I am. And if ever I have a son —

Lady Gay. Hush! Dolly, dear!

Sir Harcourt. Well! take her, boy! Although you are too young to marry.

(*They retire with* Max.)

Lady Gay. Am I forgiven, Sir Harcourt?

Sir Harcourt. Ahem! Why — a — (*Aside*) Have you really deceived me?

Lady Gay. Can you not see through this?

Sir Harcourt. And you still love me?

Lady Gay. As much as I ever did.

Sir Harcourt (*is about to kiss her hand, when* Spanker *interposes between*). A very handsome ring, indeed.

Spanker. Very.

(*Puts her arm in his, and they go up.*)

Sir Harcourt. Poor little Spanker!

Max (*coming down, aside to* Sir Harcourt). One point I wish to have settled. Who is Mr. Dazzle?

Sir Harcourt. A relative of the Spankers, he told me.

Max. Oh, no, — a near connection of yours.

Sir Harcourt. Never saw him before I came down here, in all my life. (*To* Young Courtly.) Charles, who is Mr. Dazzle?

Young Courtly. Dazzle, Dazzle, — will you excuse an impertinent question? — but who the deuce are you?

Dazzle. Certainly. I have not the remotest idea!

All. How, sir?

Dazzle. Simple question as you may think it, it would puzzle half the world to answer. One thing I can vouch — Nature made me a gentleman — that is, I live on the best that can be procured for credit. I never spend my own money when I can oblige a friend. I'm always thick on the winning horse. I'm an epidemic on the trade of a tailor. For further particulars, inquire of any sitting magistrate.

Sir Harcourt. And these are the deeds which attest your title to the name of gentleman? I perceive that you have caught the infection of the present age. Charles, permit me, as your father, and you, sir, as his friend, to correct you on one point. Bare-faced assurance is the vulgar substitute for gentlemanly ease; and there are many who, by aping the *vices* of the great, imagine that they elevate themselves to the rank of those whose faults alone they copy. No, sir! The title of gentleman is the only one *out* of any monarch's gift, yet within the reach of every peasant. It should be engrossed by *Truth* — stamped with *Honor* — sealed with *good-feeling* — signed *Man* — and enrolled in every true young English heart.

CASTE

By T. W. ROBERTSON

(1867)

TO

MISS MARIE WILTON

(*MRS. BANCROFT*)

THIS COMEDY IS DEDICATED BY HER GRATEFUL FRIEND AND FELLOW LABORER, THE AUTHOR

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Hon. George D'Alroy.
Captain Hawtree.
Eccles.
Sam Gerridge.
Dixon.
Marquise de St. Maur.
Esther Eccles.
Polly Eccles.

Act I.	The Little House at Stangate	COURTSHIP
Act II.	The Lodgings in Mayfair	MATRIMONY
Act III.	The Little House in Stangate	WIDOWHOOD

A lapse of eight months occurs between the first and the second Act, and a lapse of twelve months between the second and the third.

CASTE

ACT I.

Scene. — *A plain set chamber, paper soiled. A window, center, with practicable blind; street backing and iron railings. Door practicable, when opened showing street door (practicable). Fireplace in lower left-hand corner; two hinged gas-burners on each side of mantel-piece. Sideboard cupboard, cupboard in recess, tea-things, tea-pot, tea-caddy, tea-tray, etc., on it. Long table, before fire; old piece of carpet and rug down; plain chairs; bookshelf, back, a small table under it with ballet-shoe and skirt on it; bunch of benefit bills hanging under bookshelf. Theatrical printed portraits, framed, hanging about; chimney glass clock; box of lucifers and ornaments on mantel-shelf; kettle on hob, and fire laid; door-mats on the outside of door. Bureau in lower right-hand corner.*

Rapping heard at door, the handle is then shaken as curtain rises. The door is unlocked.

(*Enter* George D'Alroy.)

George D'Alroy. Told you so; the key was left under the mat in case I came. They're not back from rehearsal. (*Hangs up hat on peg near door as* Hawtree *enters.*) Confound rehearsal!

(*Crosses to fireplace.*)

Hawtree (*c. of stage, back to audience, looking round*). And this is the fairy's bower!

George. Yes; and this is the fairy's fireplace; the fire is laid. I'll light it.

(*Lights fire with lucifer from mantel-piece.*)

Hawtree (*turning to* George). And this is the abode rendered blessed by her abiding. It is here that she dwells, walks, talks, — eats, and drinks. Does she eat and drink?

George. Yes, heartily. I've seen her.

Hawtree. And you are really spoons! — case of true love — hit — dead.

George. Right through. Can't live away from her.

(*With elbow on end of mantel-piece, down stage.*)

Hawtree. Poor old Dal! and you've brought me over the water to —

George. Stangate.

Hawtree. Stangate — to see her for the same sort of reason that when a patient is in a dangerous state one doctor calls in another — for a consultation.

George. Yes. Then the patient dies.

Hawtree. Tell us about it — you know I've been away.

(*Sits at table, leg on chair.*)

George. Well then, eighteen months ago —

Hawtree. Oh cut that! you told me all about that. You went to a theatre, and saw a girl in a ballet, and you fell in love.

George. Yes. I found out that she was an amiable, good girl.

Hawtree. Of course; cut that. We'll credit her with all the virtues and accomplishments.

George. Who worked hard to support a drunken father.

Hawtree. Oh! the father's a drunkard, is he? The father does not inherit the daughter's virtues?

George. No. I hate him.

Hawtree. Naturally. Quite so! Quite so!

George. And she — that is, Esther — is very good to her younger sister.

Hawtree. Younger sister also angelic, amiable, accomplished, etc.

George. Um — good enough, but got a temper — large temper. Well, with some difficulty, I got to speak to her. I mean to Esther. Then I was allowed to see her to her door here.

HAWTREE. I know — pastry-cooks — Richmond dinner — and all that.

GEORGE. You're too fast. Pastry-cooks — yes. Richmond — no. Your knowledge of the world, fifty years round barracks, misleads you. I saw her nearly every day, and I kept on falling in love — falling and falling, until I thought I should never reach the bottom; then I met you.

HAWTREE. I remember the night when you told me; but I thought it was only an amourette. However, if the fire is a conflagration, subdue it; try dissipation.

GEORGE. I have.

HAWTREE. What success?

GEORGE. None; dissipation brought me bad health and self-contempt, a sick head and a sore heart.

HAWTREE. Foreign travel; absence makes the heart grow (*slight pause*) — stronger. Get leave and cut away.

GEORGE. I did get leave, and I did cut away; and while away I was miserable and a gon-er coon than ever.

HAWTREE. What's to be done?

(*Sits cross-legged on chair, facing* GEORGE.)

GEORGE. Don't know. That's the reason I asked you to come over and see.

HAWTREE. Of course, Dal, you're not such a soft as to think of marriage. You know what your mother is. Either you are going to behave properly, with a proper regard for the world, and all that, you know; or you're going to do the other thing. Now, the question is, what do you mean to do? The girl is a nice girl, no doubt; but as to your making her Mrs. D'Alroy, the thing is out of the question.

GEORGE. Why? What should prevent me?

HAWTREE. Caste! — the inexorable law of caste. The social law, so becoming and so good, that commands like to mate with like, and forbids a giraffe to fall in love with a squirrel.

GEORGE. But my dear Bark —

HAWTREE. My dear Dal, all those marriages of people with common people are all very well in novels and plays on the stage, because the real people don't exist, and have no relatives who exist, and no connections, and so no harm's done, and it's rather interesting to look at; but in real life with real relations, and real mothers and so forth, it's absolute bosh; it's worse, it's utter social and personal annihilation and damnation.

GEORGE. As to my mother, I haven't thought about her. (*Sits corner of table.*)

HAWTREE. Of course not. Lovers are so damned selfish; they never think of anybody but themselves.

GEORGE. My father died when I was three years old, and she married again before I was six, and married a Frenchman.

HAWTREE. A nobleman of the most ancient families of France, of equal blood to her own. She obeyed the duties imposed on her by her station and by caste.

GEORGE. Still, it caused a separation and a division between us, and I never see my brother, because he lives abroad. Of course the Marquise de St. Maur is my mother, and I look upon her with a sort of superstitious awe.

(*Moves chair with which he has been twisting about during speech from table to left corner.*)

HAWTREE. She's a grand Brahmin priestess.

GEORGE. Just so; and I know I'm a fool. Now you're clever, Bark, — a little too clever, I think. You're paying your devoirs — that's the correct word, isn't it — to Lady Florence Carberry, the daughter of a countess. She's above you — you've no title. Is she to forget *her* caste?

HAWTREE. That argument doesn't apply. A man can be no more than a gentleman.

GEORGE.

"True hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

HAWTREE. Now, George, if you're going to consider this question from the point of view of poetry, you're off to

No-Man's Land, where I won't follow you.

GEORGE. No gentleman can be ashamed of the woman he loves. No matter what her original station, once his wife he raises her to his rank.

HAWTREE. Yes, he raises her; — *her;* but her connections — her relatives. How about them?

(ECCLES *enters.*)

ECCLES (*outside*). Polly! Polly! Polly! (*Enters.*) Why the devil —

(GEORGE *crosses to* HAWTREE, *who rises.* ECCLES *sees them and assumes a deferential manner.*)

ECCLES. Oh, Mr. De-Alroy! I didn't see you, sir. Good afternoon; the same to you, sir, and many on'em.

(*Puts hat on bureau and comes down.*)

HAWTREE. Who is this?

GEORGE. This is papa.

HAWTREE. Ah!

(*Turns up to book-shelf, scanning* ECCLES *through eye-glass.*)

GEORGE. Miss Eccles and her sister not returned from rehearsal yet?

ECCLES. No, sir, they have not. I expect 'em in directly. I hope you've been quite well since I seen you last, sir?

GEORGE. Quite, thank you; and how have you been, Mr. Eccles?

ECCLES. Well, sir, I have not been the thing at all. My 'elth, sir, and my spirits is both broke. I'm not the man I used to be. I am not accustomed to this sort of thing. I've seen better days, but they are gone — most like for ever. It is a melancholy thing, sir, for a man of my time of life to look back on better days that are gone most like for ever.

GEORGE. I daresay.

ECCLES. Once proud and prosperous, now poor and lowly. Once master of a shop, I am now, by the pressure of circumstances over which I have no control, driven to seek work and not to find it. Poverty is a dreadful thing, sir, for a man as has once been well off.

GEORGE. I daresay.

ECCLES (*sighing*). Ah, sir, the poor and lowly is often 'ardly used. What chance has the working-man?

HAWTREE. None when he don't work.

ECCLES. We are all equal in mind and feeling.

GEORGE (*aside*). I hope not.

ECCLES. I am sorry, gentlemen, that I cannot offer you any refreshment; but luxury and me has long been strangers.

GEORGE. I am very sorry for your misfortunes, Mr. Eccles. (*Looking round at* HAWTREE, *who turns away.*) May I hope that you will allow me to offer you this trifling loan?

(*Giving him a half-sovereign.*)

ECCLES. Sir, you're a gentleman. One can tell a real gentleman with half a sov — I mean half an eye — a real gentleman understands the natural emotions of the working-man. Pride, sir, is a thing as should be put down by the strong 'and of pecuniary necessity. There's a friend of mine round the corner as I promised to meet on a little matter of business; so if you will excuse me, sir —

GEORGE. With pleasure.

ECCLES (*going up*). Sorry to leave you, gentlemen, but —

GEORGE. Don't stay on my account.

HAWTREE. Don't mention it.

ECCLES. Business is business. (*Goes up.*) The girls will be in directly. Good afternoon, gentlemen, — good afternoon — (*Going out.*) Good afternoon.

(*Exit.*)

(GEORGE *sits in chair, corner of table, right.*)

HAWTREE (*coming down left of table*). Papa is not nice, but — (*sitting on corner of table down stage.*)

"True hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

Poor George! I wonder what your mamma — the Most Noble the Marquise de St. Maur — would think of Papa Eccles. Come, Dal, allow that there *is something* in caste. Conceive that dirty ruffian — that rinsing of stale beer — that walking tap-room, for a father-in-law. Take a spin to Central America. Forget her.

George. Can't.

Hawtree. You'll be wretched and miserable with her.

George. I'd rather be wretched with her than miserable without her. (Hawtree *takes out cigar case.*) Don't smoke here!

Hawtree. Why not?

George. She'll be coming in directly.

Hawtree. I don't think she'd mind.

George. I should. Do you smoke before Lady Florence Carberry?

Hawtree (*closing case*). Ha! You're suffering from a fit of the morals.

George. What's that?

Hawtree. The morals is a disease, like the measles, that attacks the young and innocent.

George (*with temper*). You talk like Mephistopheles, without the cleverness.

(*Goes up to window, and looks at watch.*)

Hawtree (*arranging cravat at glass*). I don't pretend to be a particularly good sort of fellow, nor a particularly bad sort of fellow. I suppose I'm about the average standard sort of thing, and I don't like to see a friend go down hill to the devil while I can put the drag on. (*Turning, with back to fire.*) Here is a girl of very humble station — poor, and all that, with a drunken father, who evidently doesn't care how he gets money so long as he don't work for it. Marriage! Pah! Couldn't the thing be arranged?

George. Hawtree, cut that! (*At window.*) She's here!

(*Goes to door and opens it.*)

(*Enter* Esther.)

George (*flurried at sight of her*). Good morning. I got here before you, you see.

Esther. Good morning.

(*Sees* Hawtree — *slight pause, in which* Hawtree *has removed his hat.*)

George. I've taken the liberty — I hope you won't be angry — of asking you to let me present a friend of mine to you; Miss Eccles — Captain Hawtree.

(Hawtree *bows.* George *assists* Esther *in taking off bonnet and shawl.*)

Hawtree (*aside*). Pretty.

Esther (*aside*). Thinks too much of himself.

George (*hangs up bonnet and shawl on pegs*). You've had a late rehearsal. Where's Polly?

Esther. She stayed behind to buy something.

(*Enter* Polly.)

Polly (*head through door*). How de do, Mr. D'Alroy? Oh! I'm tired to death. Kept at rehearsal by an old fool of a stage manager. But stage managers are always old fools, — except when they are young. We shan't have time for any dinner, so I've brought something for tea.

Esther. What is it?

Polly. Ham. (*Showing ham in paper.* Esther *sits right, at window. Crossing. Seeing* Hawtree.) Oh! I beg your pardon, sir. I didn't see you.

George. A friend of mine, Mary. Captain Hawtree — Miss Mary Eccles.

(George *sits left, at window.* Polly *bows very low, to left, to right, and to front, half burlesquely, to* Hawtree.)

Hawtree. Charmed.

Polly (*aside*). What a swell. Got nice teeth, and he knows it. How quiet we all are; let's talk about something.

(*Hangs up her hat. She crosses left to fire, round table-front.* Hawtree *crosses and places hat on bureau.*)

Esther. What can we talk about?

Polly. Anything. Ham. Mr. D'Alroy, do you like ham?

George. I adore her — (Polly *titters.*) — I mean I adore it.

Polly (*to* Hawtree, *who has crossed to table watching* Polly *undo paper containing ham. She turns the plate on top of* *the ham still in the paper, then throws the paper aside and triumphantly brings the plate under* Hawtree's *nose,* Hawtree *giving a little start back*). Do you like ham, sir?

(*Very tragically.*)

Hawtree. Yes.

Polly. Now that is very strange. I should have thought you'd have been above ham. (*Getting tea-tray.*)

Hawtree. May one ask why?

Polly. You look above it. You look quite equal to tongue — glazed. (*Laughing.*) Mr. D'Alroy is here so often that he knows our ways.

(*Getting tea-things from sideboard and placing them on table.*)

Hawtree. I like everything that is piquante and fresh, and pretty and agreeable.

Polly (*laying table all the time for tea*). Ah! you mean that for me. (*Curtseying.*) Oh! (*Sings.*) Tra, la, la, la, la, la. (*Flourishes cup in his face; he retreats a step.*) Now I must put the kettle on. (George *and* Esther *are at window.*) Esther never does any work when Mr. D'Alroy is here. They're spooning; ugly word, spooning, isn't it? — reminds one of red-currant jam. By the bye, love *is* very like red-currant jam — at the first taste sweet, and afterwards shuddery. Do you ever spoon?

Hawtree (*leaning across table*). I should like to do so at this moment.

Polly. I daresay you would. No, you're too grand for me. You want taking down a peg — I mean a foot. Let's see — what are you — a corporal?

Hawtree. Captain.

Polly. I prefer a corporal. See here. Let's change about. You be corporal — it'll do you good, and I'll be "my lady."

Hawtree. Pleasure.

Polly. You must call me "my lady," though, or you shan't have any ham.

Hawtree. Certainly, "my lady"; but I cannot accept your hospitality, for I'm engaged to dine.

Polly. At what time?

Hawtree. Seven.

Polly. Seven! Why, that's half-past tea-time. Now, Corporal, you must wait on me.

Hawtree. As the pages did of old.

Polly. "My lady."

Hawtree. "My lady."

Polly. Here's the kettle, Corporal.

(*Holding out kettle at arm's length.* Hawtree *looks at it through eye-glass.*)

Hawtree. Very nice kettle.

Polly. Take it into the back kitchen.

Hawtree. Eh!

Polly. Oh, I'm coming too.

Hawtree. Ah! that alters the case.

(*He takes out handkerchief and then takes hold of kettle — crosses as* George *rises and comes down, slapping* Hawtree *on back.* Hawtree *immediately places kettle on the floor.* Polly *throws herself into chair by fireside up stage, and roars with laughter.* George *and* Esther *laugh.*)

George. What are you about?

Hawtree. I'm about to fill the kettle.

Esther (*going to* Polly). Mind what you are doing, Polly. What will Sam say?

Polly. Whatever Sam chooses. What the sweetheart don't see the husband can't grieve at. Now then — Corporal!

Hawtree. "My lady!"

(*Takes up kettle.*)

Polly. Attention! Forward! March! and mind the soot don't drop upon your trousers.

(*Exeunt* Polly *and* Hawtree, Hawtree *first.*)

Esther. What a girl it is — all spirits! The worst is that it is so easy to mistake her!

George. And so easy to find out your mistake. (*They cross down stage,* Esther *first.*) But why won't you let me present you with a piano?

(*Following* Esther.)

Esther. I don't want one.

George. You said you were fond of playing.

Esther. We may be fond of many

things without having them. (*Leaning against end of table. Taking out letter.*) Now here is a gentleman says he is attached to me.

George (*jealous*). May I know his name?

Esther. What for? It would be useless, as his solicitations —

(*Throws letter into fire.*)

George. I lit that fire.

Esther. Then burn these, too. (George *crosses to fire.*) No, not that. (*Taking one back.*) I must keep that; burn the others.

(George *throws letter on fire, crosses back of table quickly — takes hat from peg and goes to door as if leaving hurriedly.* Esther *takes chair from table and goes to centre of stage with it, noticing* George's *manner.* George *hesitates at door. Shuts it quickly, hangs his hat up again, and comes down to back of chair in which* Esther *has seated herself.*)

George. Who is that from?

Esther. Why do you wish to know?

George. Because I love you, and I don't think you love me, and I fear a rival.

Esther. You have none.

George. I know you have so many admirers.

Esther. They're nothing to me.

George. Not one?

Esther. No. They're admirers, but there's not a husband among them.

George. Not the writer of that letter?

Esther (*coquettishly*). Oh, I like him very much.

George (*sighing*). Ah!

Esther. And I'm very fond of this letter.

George. Then, Esther, you don't care for me.

Esther. Don't I? How do you know?

George. Because you won't let me read that letter.

Esther. It won't please you if you see it.

George. I daresay not. That's just the reason that I want to. You won't?

Esther (*hesitates*). I will. There!

(*Giving it to him.*)

George (*reads*). "Dear Madam."

Esther. That's tender, isn't it?

George. "The terms are four pounds — your dresses to be found. For eight weeks certain, and longer if you should suit. (*In astonishment.*) I cannot close the engagement until the return of my partner. I expect him back to-day, and I will write you as soon as I have seen him. Yours very," etc. Four pounds — find dresses. What does this mean?

Esther. It means that they want a Columbine for the Pantomime at Manchester, and I think I shall get the engagement.

George. Manchester; then you'll leave London?

Esther. I must. (*Pathetically.*) You see this little house is on my shoulders. Polly only earns eighteen shillings a week, and father has been out of work a long, long time. I make the bread here, and it's hard to make sometimes. I've been mistress of this place, and forced to think ever since my mother died, and I was eight years old. Four pounds a week is a large sum, and I can save out of it.

(*This speech is not to be spoken in a tone implying hardship.*)

George. But you'll go away, and I shan't see you.

Esther. P'r'aps it will be for the best. (*Rises and crosses.*) What future is there for us? You're a man of rank, and I am a poor girl who gets her living by dancing. It would have been better that we had never met.

George. No.

Esther. Yes, it would, for I'm afraid that —

George. You love me?

Esther. I don't know. I'm not sure; but I think I do.

(*Stops and turns half-face to* George.)

George (*trying to seize her hand*). Esther!

Esther. No. Think of the difference of our stations.

George. That's what Hawtree says! Caste! caste! curse caste!

(*Goes up.*)

Esther. If I go to Manchester it will be for the best. We must both try to forget each other.

George (*comes down left of table*). Forget you! no, Esther; let me —

(*Seizing her hand.*)

Polly (*without*). Mind what you're about. Oh dear! oh dear!

(George *and* Esther *sit in window seat.*)

(*Enter* Polly *and* Hawtree.)

Polly. You nasty, great clumsy Corporal, you've spilt the water all over my frock. Oh dear! (*Coming down.* Hawtree *puts kettle on ham on table.*) Take it off the ham! (Hawtree *then places it on the mantel-piece.*) No, no! put it in the fireplace. (Hawtree *does so.*) You've spoilt my frock. (*Sitting.*)

Hawtree. Allow me to offer you a new one. (*Crossing.*)

Polly. No, I won't. You'll be calling to see how it looks when it's on. Haven't you got a handkerchief?

Hawtree. Yes.

Polly. Then wipe it dry.

(Hawtree *bends almost on one knee, and wipes dress. Enter* Sam, *whistling. Throws cap into* Hawtree's *hat on drawers.*)

Sam (*sulkily*). Arternoon — yer didn't hear me knock! — the door was open. I'm afraid I intrude.

Polly. No, you don't. We're glad to see you if you've got a handkerchief. Help to wipe this dry.

(Sam *pulls out handkerchief from slop, and dropping on one knee snatches skirt of dress from* Hawtree, *who looks up surprised.*)

Hawtree. I'm very sorry. (*Rising.*) I beg your pardon.

(*Business;* Sam *stares* Hawtree *out.*)

Polly. It won't spoil it.

Sam. The stain won't come out.

(*Rising.*)

Polly. It's only water.

Sam (*to* Esther). Arternoon, Miss Eccles. (*To* George.) Arternoon, sir! (Polly *rises. To* Polly.) Who's the other swell?

Polly. I'll introduce you. Captain Hawtree — Mr. Samuel Gerridge.

Hawtree. Charmed, I'm sure. (*Staring at* Sam *through eye-glass.* Sam *acknowledges* Hawtree's *recognition by a "chuck" of the head over left shoulder; going up to* George.) Who's this?

George. Polly's sweetheart.

Hawtree. Oh! Now if I can be of no further assistance, I'll go.

(*Comes over back down to drawers.*)

Polly. Going, Corporal?

Hawtree. Yaas! (*Business; taking up hat and stick from bureau he sees* Sam's *cap. He picks it out carefully, and coming down stage examines it as a curiosity, drops it on the floor and pushes it away with his stick, at the same time moving backwards, causing him to bump against* Sam, *who turns round savagely.*) I beg your pardon. (*Crossing up stage.*) George, will you — (George *takes no notice.*) Will you — ?

George. What!

Hawtree. Go with me?

George. Go? No!

Hawtree (*coming down to* Polly). Then, Miss Eccles — I mean "my lady."

(*Shaking hands and going; as he backs away bumps against* Sam, *and business repeated,* Hawtree *close to door, keeping his eye on* Sam, *who has shown signs of anger.*)

Polly. Good-bye, Corporal!

Hawtree (*at door*). Good-bye! Good afternoon, Mr. — Mr. — er — Pardon me.

Sam (*with constrained rage*). Gerridge, sir — Gerridge.

Hawtree (*as if remembering name*). Ah! Gerridge. Good-day. (*Exit.*)

Sam (*turning to* Polly *in awful rage*). Who's that fool? Who's that long idiot?

Polly. I told you; Captain Hawtree.

Sam. What's 'e want 'ere?

Polly. He's a friend of Mr. D'Alroy's.

Sam. Ugh! Isn't one of 'em enough!

Polly. What do you mean?

Sam. For the neighbors to talk about. Who's he after?

Polly. What do you mean by after? You're forgetting yourself, I think.

Sam. No, I'm not forgetting myself — I'm remembering you. What can a long fool of a swell dressed up to the nines within an inch of his life want with two girls of your class? Look at the difference of your stations! 'E don't come 'ere after any good.

(*During the speech,* Esther *crosses to fire and sits before it in a low chair.* George *follows her and sits on her left.*)

Polly. Samuel!

Sam. I mean what I say. People should stick to their own class. Life's a railway journey, and Mankind's a passenger — first class, second class, third class. Any person found riding in a superior class to that for which he has taken his ticket will be removed at the first station stopped at, according to the bye-laws of the company.

Polly. You're giving yourself nice airs! What business is it of yours who comes here? Who are you?

Sam. I'm a mechanic.

Polly. That's evident.

Sam. I ain't ashamed of it. I'm not ashamed of my paper cap.

Polly. Why should you be? I daresay Captain Hawtree isn't ashamed of his fourteen-and-sixpenny gossamer.

Sam. You think a deal of him 'cos he's a captain. Why did he call you "my lady"?

Polly. Because he treated me as one. I wish you'd make the same mistake.

Sam. Ugh!

(Sam *goes angrily to bureau,* Polly *bounces up stage, and sits in window seat.*)

Esther (*sitting with* George, *tête-à-tête, by fire*). But we must listen to reason.

George. I hate reason!

Esther. I wonder what it means?

George. Everything disagreeable. When people talk unpleasantly, they always say listen to reason.

Sam (*turning round*). What will the neighbors say?

Polly. I don't care!

(*Coming down.*)

Sam. What will the neighbors *think?*

Polly. They can't think. They're like you, they've not been educated up to it.

Sam. It all comes of your being on the stage.

(*Going to* Polly.)

Polly. It all comes of your not understanding the stage or anything else — but putty. Now, if you were a gentleman —

Sam. Why then, of course, I should make up to a lady.

Polly. Ugh!

(Polly *flings herself into chair by table.* Sam *comes down.*)

George. Reason's an idiot! Two and two are four, and twelve are fifteen, and eight are twenty. That's reason!

Sam (*turning to* Polly). Painting your cheeks!

Polly (*rising*). Better paint our *cheeks* than paint *nasty old doors* as you do. How can you understand art? You're only a mechanic! You're not a professional! You're in trade. You are not of the same station as we are. When the manager speaks to you, you touch your hat, and say, "Yes, sir," because he's your superior.

(*Snaps fingers under* Sam's *nose.*)

George. When people love there's no such thing as money — it don't exist.

Esther. Yes, it does.

George. Then it oughtn't to.

Sam. The manager employs me same as he does you. Payment is good anywhere and everywhere. Whatever's commercial, is right.

Polly. Actors are not like mechanics. They wear cloth coats, and not fustian jackets.

Sam (*sneeringly, in* Polly's *face*). I despise play actors.

Polly. I despise mechanics.

(Polly *slaps his face.*)

George. I never think of anything else but you.

Esther. Really?

Sam (*goes to bureau, misses cap, looks around, sees it on floor, picks it up angrily, and comes to* Polly, *who is sitting in chair, right of table*). I won't stay here to be insulted.

(*Putting on cap.*)

Polly. Nobody wants you to stay. Go! Go! Go!

Sam. I will go. Good-bye, Miss Mary Eccles. (*Goes off and returns quickly.*) I shan't come here again!

(*At door half-open.*)

Polly. Don't! Good riddance to bad rubbish.

Sam (*rushing down stage to* Polly). You can go to your *captain!*

Polly. And you to your *putty.*

(Sam *throws his cap down and kicks it — then goes up stage and picks it up.* Polly *turns and rises, leaning against table, facing him, crosses to door, and locks it.* Sam, *hearing click of lock, turns quickly.*)

Esther. And shall you always love me as you do now?

George. More.

Polly. Now you *shan't go.* (*Locking door, taking out key, which she pockets, and placing her back against door.*) Nyer! Now I'll just show you my power. Nyer!

Sam. *Miss Mary* Eccles, let me out! (*Advancing to door.*)

Polly. *Mr.* Samuel Gerridge, I shan't!

(Sam *turns away.*)

Esther. Now you two. (*Postman's knock.*) The postman!

Sam. Now you must let me out. You must unlock the door.

Polly. No, I needn't. (*Opens window, looking out.*) Here — postman. (*Takes letter from postman, at window.*) Thank you. (*Business; flicks* Sam *in the face with letter.*) For you, Esther!

Esther (*rising*). For me?

Polly. Yes.

(*Gives it to her, and closes window, and returns to door triumphantly.* Sam *goes to window.*)

Esther (*going down*). From Manchester!

George. Manchester?

(*Coming down back of* Esther.)

Esther (*reading*). I've got the engagement — four pounds a week.

George (*placing his arm around her*). You shan't go. Esther — stay — be my wife!

Esther. But the world — your world?

George. Hang the world! You're my world. Stay with your husband, *Mrs. George D'Alroy.*

(*During this* Polly *has been dancing up and down in front of the door.*)

Sam. I *will* go out.

(*Turning with sudden determination.*)

Polly. You can't, and you shan't!

Sam. I can — I will!

(*Opens window, and jumps out.*)

Polly (*frightened*). He's hurt himself. Sam — Sam, — dear Sam!

(*Running to window.* Sam *appears at window.* Polly *slaps his face and shuts window down violently.*)

Nyer!

(*During this* George *has kissed* Esther.)

George. *My wife!*

(*The handle of the door is heard to rattle, then the door is shaken violently.* Esther *crosses to door; finding it locked, turns to* Polly *sitting in window seat, who gives her the key.* Esther *then opens the door.* Eccles *reels in, very drunk, and clings to the corner of bureau for support.* George *stands pulling his moustache.* Esther, *a little way up, looking with shame first at her father, then at* George. Polly *sitting in window recess.*)

ACT II.

Scene. — D'Alroy's *lodgings in Mayfair. A set chamber. Folding-doors opening* *on to drawing-room. Door on the right. Two windows, right, with muslin curtains. Loo-table. Sofa above piano. Two easy-chairs, right and left of table. Dessert — claret in jug; two wine-glasses half full. Box of cigarettes, vase of flowers, embroidered slipper on canvas, and small basket of colored wools, all on table. Foot-stool by easy-chair. Ornamental gilt work-basket on stand in window. Easy-chair. Piano, left. Mahogany-stained easel with oil-painting of* D'Alroy *in full dragoon regimentals. Davenport with vase of flowers on it; a chair on each side; a water-color drawing over it, and on each side of room. Half moonlight through window.*

(Esther *and* George *discovered.* Esther *at window. When curtain has risen she comes down slowly to chair right of table, and* George *sitting in easy-chair left of table.* George *has his uniform trousers and spurs on.*)

Esther. George, dear, you seem out of spirits.

George (*smoking cigarette*). Not at all, dear, not at all. (*Rallying.*)

Esther. Then why don't you talk?

George. I've nothing to say.

Esther. That's no reason.

George. I can't talk about nothing.

Esther. Yes, you can; you often do. (*Crossing round back of table and caressing him.*) You used to do before we were married.

George. No, I didn't. I talked about you, and my love for you. D'ye call that nothing?

Esther (*sitting on stool left of* George). How long have we been married, dear? Let me see; six months yesterday. (*Dreamily.*) It hardly seems a week; it almost seems a dream.

George (*putting his arm around her*). Awfully jolly dream. Don't let us wake up. (*Aside and recovering himself.*) How ever shall I tell her?

Esther. And when I married you I was twenty-two, wasn't I?

George. Yes, dear; but then, you know, you must have been some age or other.

Esther. No; but to think I lived two and twenty years without knowing you!

George. What of it, dear?

Esther. It seems such a dreadful waste of time.

George. So it was — awful.

Esther. Do you remember our first meeting? Then I was in the ballet.

George. Yes; now you're in the heavies.

Esther. Then I was in the front rank — now I am of high rank — the Honorable Mrs. George D'Alroy. You promoted me to be your wife.

George. No, dear, you promoted me to be your husband.

Esther. And now I'm one of the aristocracy; ain't I?

George. Yes, dear; I suppose that we may consider ourselves —

Esther. Tell me, George; are you quite sure that you are proud of your poor little humble wife?

George. Proud of you! Proud as the winner of the Derby.

Esther. Wouldn't you have loved me better if I'd been a lady?

George. You *are* a lady — you're my wife.

Esther. What will your mamma say when she knows of our marriage? I quite tremble at the thought of meeting her.

George. So do I. Luckily she's in Rome.

Esther. Do you know, George, I should like to be married all over again.

George. Not to anybody else, I hope?

Esther. My darling!

George. But why over again? Why?

Esther. Our courtship was so beautiful. It was like in a novel from the library, only better. You, a fine, rich, high-born gentleman, coming to our humble little house to court poor me. Do you remember the ballet you first saw me in? That was at Covent Garden. "Jeanne la Folle; or, the Return of the Soldier." (*Goes up to piano.*) Don't you remember the dance?

(*Plays a quick movement.*)

George. Esther, how came you to learn to play the piano? Did you teach yourself?

Esther. Yes. (*Turning on music-stool.*) So did Polly. We can only just touch the notes to amuse ourselves.

George. How was it?

Esther. I've told you so often.

(*Rises and sits on stool at* George's *feet.*)

George. Tell me again. I'm like the children — I like to hear what I know already.

Esther. Well, then, mother died when I was quite young. I can only just remember her. Polly was an infant; so I had to be Polly's mother. Father — who is a very eccentric man (George *sighs deeply* — Esther *notices it and goes on rapidly — all to be simultaneous in action*) but a very good one when you know him — did not take much notice of us, and we got on as we could. We used to let the first floor, and a lodger took it — Herr Griffenhaagen. He was a ballet master at the Opera. He took a fancy to me, and asked me if I should like to learn to dance, and I told him father couldn't afford to pay for my tuition; and he said that (*imitation*) he did not vant bayment, but dat he would teach me for noding, for he had taken a fancy to me, because I was like a leetle lady he had known long years ago in de far off land he came from. Then he got us an engagement at the theatre. That was how we first were in the ballet.

George (*slapping his leg*). That fellow was a great brick; I should like to ask him to dinner. What became of him?

Esther. I don't know. He left England. (George *fidgets and looks at watch.*) You are very restless, George. What's the matter?

George. Nothing.

Esther. Are you going out?

George. Yes. (*Looking at his boots and spurs.*) That's the reason I dined in —

Esther. To the barracks?

George. Yes.

Esther. On duty?

George (*hesitatingly*). On duty. (*Rising.*) And, of course, when a man is a soldier, he must go on duty when he's ordered, and where he's ordered, and — and — (*aside*) — why did I ever enter the service?

(*Crosses.*)

Esther (*rises, crosses to* George — *and twining her arm round him*). George, if you must go out to your club, go; don't mind leaving me. Somehow or other, George, these last few days everything seems to have changed with me — I don't know why. Sometimes my eyes fill with tears, for no reason, and sometimes I feel so happy, for no reason. I don't mind being left by myself as I used to do. When you are a few minutes behind time I don't run to the window and watch for you, and turn irritable. Not that I love you less — no, for I love you more; but often when you are away I don't feel that I am by myself. (*Dropping her head on his breast.*) I never feel alone.

(*Goes to piano and turns over music.*)

George (*watching* Esther). What angels women are! At least, this one is. I forget all about the others. (*Carriage-wheels heard off.*) If I'd known I could have been so happy, I'd have sold out when I married.

(*Knock at street door.*)

Esther (*standing at table*). That for us, dear?

George (*at first window*). Hawtree in a hansom. He's come for — (*aside*) — me. I *must* tell her sooner or later. (*At door.*) Come in, Hawtree.

(*Enter* Hawtree, *in regimentals.*)

Hawtree. How do? Hope you're well, Mrs. D'Alroy? (*Coming down.*) George, are you coming to —

George (*coming down left of* Hawtree). No, I've dined — (*gives a significant look* — we dined early.

(Esther *plays scraps of music at piano.*)

Hawtree (*sotto voce*). Haven't you told her?

George. No, I daren't.

Hawtree. But you must.

George. You know what an awful coward I am. You do it for me.

Hawtree. Not for worlds. I've just had my own adieux to make.

George. Ah, yes, — to Florence Carberry. How did she take it?

Hawtree. Oh, (*slight pause*) very well.

George (*earnestly*). Did she cry?

Hawtree. No.

George. Nor exhibit any emotion whatever?

Hawtree. No, not particularly.

George (*surprisedly*). Didn't you kiss her?

Hawtree. No; Lady Clardonax was in the room.

George (*wonderingly*). Didn't she squeeze your hand?

Hawtree. No.

George (*impressively*). Didn't she say anything?

Hawtree. No, except that she hoped to see me back again soon, and that India was a bad climate.

George. Umph! It seems to have been a tragic parting (*serio-comically*) — almost as tragic as parting — your back hair.

Hawtree. Lady Florence is not the sort of person to make a scene.

George. To be sure, she's not your wife. I wish Esther would be as cool and comfortable. (*After a pause.*) No, I don't, — no, I don't. (*A rap at door.*)

(*Enter* Dixon.)

George (*goes up to* Dixon). Oh, Dixon, lay out my —

Dixon. I have laid them out, sir; everything is ready.

George (*going down to* Hawtree — *after a pause, irresolutely*). I must tell her — mustn't I?

Hawtree. Better send for her sister. Let Dixon go for her in a cab.

George. Just so. I'll send him at once. Dixon!

(*Goes up and talks to* Dixon.)

Esther (*rising and going to back of chair, left of table*). Do you want to have a talk with my husband? Shall I go into the dining-room?

Hawtree. No, Mrs. D'Alroy.

(*Going to table and placing cap on it.*)

George. No, dear. At once, Dixon. Tell the cabman to drive like — (*exit* Dixon) — like a — cornet just joined.

Esther (*to* Hawtree). Are you going to take him anywhere?

Hawtree (George *comes down to* Hawtree *and touches him quickly on the shoulder before he can speak*). No. (*Aside.*) Yes — to India. (*Crossing to* George.) Tell her now.

George. No, no. I'll wait till I put on my uniform. (*Going up.*)

(*Door opens, and* Polly *peeps in.*)

Polly. How d'ye do, good people, — quite well?

(Polly *gets back of table — kisses* Esther.)

George. Eh? Didn't you meet Dixon?

Polly. Who?

George. Dixon — my man.

Polly. No.

George. Confound it! — he'll have his ride for nothing. How d'ye do, Polly? (*Shakes hands.*)

Polly. How d'ye do, George.

(Esther *takes* Polly's *things and places them up stage.* Polly *places parasol on table.* Esther *returns left of* Polly.)

Polly. Bless you, my turtles. (*Blessing them, ballet fashion.*) George, kiss your mother. (*He kisses her.*) That's what I call an honorable brother-in-law's kiss. I'm not in the way, am I?

George (*behind easy-chair right of table*). Not at all. I'm very glad you've come.

(Esther *shows* Polly *the new music.* Polly *sits at the piano and plays comic tune.*)

Hawtree (*back to audience, and elbow on easy-chair, aside to* George). Under ordinary circumstances she's not a very eligible visitor.

George. Caste again. (*Going up.*) I'll be back directly.

(*Exit* George.)

Hawtree (*looking at watch and crossing*). Mrs. D'Alroy, I —

Esther (*who is standing over* Polly *at piano*). Going?

Polly (*rising*). Do I drive you away, Captain?

(*Taking her parasol from table.* Esther *gets to back of chair left of table.*)

Hawtree. No.

Polly. Yes, I do. I frighten you, I'm so ugly. I know I do. You frighten me.

Hawtree. How so?

Polly. You're so handsome. (*Coming down.*) Particularly in those clothes, for all the world like an inspector of police.

Esther (*half aside*). Polly!

Polly. I will! I like to take him down a bit.

Hawtree (*aside*). This is rather a wild sort of thing in sisters-in-law.

Polly. Any news, Captain?

Hawtree (*in a drawling tone*). No. Is there any news with you?

Polly (*imitating him*). Yaas; we've got a new piece coming out at our theatre.

Hawtree (*interested*). What's it about?

Polly (*drawling*). I don't know. (*To* Esther.) Had him there! (Hawtree *drops his sword from his arm;* Polly *turns round quickly, hearing the noise, and pretends to be frightened.*) Going to kill anybody to-day, that you've got your sword on?

Hawtree. No.

Polly. I thought not. (*Sings.*)

"With a sabre on his brow,
And a helmet by his side,
The soldier sweethearts servant-maids,
And eats cold meat besides."

(*Laughs and walks about waving her parasol.*)

(*Enter* George *in uniform, carrying in his hand his sword, sword-belt, and cap.* Esther *takes them from him, and places them on sofa, then comes half down.* George *goes down by* Hawtree.)

Polly (*clapping her hands*). Oh! here's a beautiful brother-in-law! Why didn't you come in on horseback as they do at Astley's? — gallop in and say (*imitating soldier on horseback and prancing up and down stage during the piece*), Soldiers of France! the eyes of Europe are a-looking at you! The Empire has confidence in you, and France expects that every man this day will do his — little utmost! The foe is before you — more's the pity — and you are before them — worse luck for you! Forward! Go and get killed; and to those who escape the Emperor will give a little bit of ribbon! Nineteens, about! Forward! Gallop! Charge!

(*Galloping to right, imitating bugle, and giving point with parasol. She nearly spears* Hawtree's *nose.* Hawtree *claps his hand upon his sword-hilt. She throws herself into chair, laughing, and clapping* Hawtree's *cap (from table) upon her head. All laugh and applaud. Carriage-wheels heard without.*)

Polly. Oh, what a funny little cap, it's got no peak. (*A peal of knocks heard at street door.*) What's that?

George (*who has hastened to window*). A carriage! Good heavens — my mother!

Hawtree (*at window*). The Marchioness!

Esther (*crossing to* George). Oh, George!

Polly (*crossing to window*). A Marchioness! A real, live Marchioness! Let me look! I never saw a real live Marchioness in all my life.

George (*forcing her from window*). No, no, no! She doesn't know I'm married. I must break it to her by degrees. What shall I do?

(*By this time* Hawtree *is at door right.* Esther *at door left.*)

Esther. Let me go into the bedroom until —

Hawtree. Too late! She's on the stairs.

Esther. Here, then!

(*At centre doors, opens them.*)

Polly. I want to see a real, live March —

(George *lifts her in his arms and places her within folding-doors with* Esther — *then shutting doors quickly, turns and faces* Hawtree, *who, gathering up his sword, faces* George. *They then exchange places much in the fashion of soldiers "mounting guard." As* George *opens door and admits* Marchioness, Hawtree *drops down to left.*)

George (*with great ceremony*). My dear mother, I saw you getting out of the carriage.

Marchioness. My dear boy. (*Kissing his forehead.*) I'm so glad I got to London before you embarked. (George *nervous.* Hawtree *coming down.*) Captain Hawtree, I think. How do you do?

Hawtree (*coming forward a little*). Quite well, I thank your ladyship. I trust you are —

Marchioness (*sitting in easy-chair*). Oh, quite, thanks. (*Slight pause.*) Do you still see the Countess and Lady Florence?

(*Looking at him through her glasses.*)

Hawtree. Yes.

Marchioness. Please remember me to them — (Hawtree *takes cap from table, and places sword under his arm.*) Are you going?

Hawtree. Ya-a-s. — Compelled. (*Bows, crossing round back of table. — To* George, *who meets him.*) I'll be at the door for you at seven. We must be at barracks by the quarter. (George *crosses back of table.*) Poor devil! This comes of a man marrying beneath him.

(*Exit* Hawtree. George *comes down left of table.*)

Marchioness. I'm not sorry that he's gone, for I wanted to talk to you alone. Strange that a woman of such good birth as the Countess should encourage the attention of Captain Hawtree for her daughter Florence. (*During these lines* D'Alroy *conceals* Polly's *hat and umbrella under table.*) Lady Clardonax was one of the old Carberrys of Hampshire — not the Norfolk Carberrys, but the direct line. And Mr. Hawtree's grandfather was in trade — something in the City — soap, I think. Stool, George! (*Points to stool.* George *brings it to her. She motions that he is to sit at her feet;* George *does so with a sigh.*) He's a very nice person, but parvenu, as one may see by his languor and his swagger. My boy (*kissing his forehead*), I am sure, will never make a mésalliance. He is a D'Alroy, and by his mother's side Planta-genista. The source of our life stream is royal.

George. How is the Marquis?

Marchioness. Paralyzed. I left him at Spa with three physicians. He is always paralyzed at this time of the year; it is in the family. The paralysis is not personal, but hereditary. I came over to see my steward; got to town last night.

George. How did you find me out here?

Marchioness. I sent the footman to the barracks, and he saw your man Dixon in the street, and Dixon gave him this address. It's so long since I've seen you. (*Leans back in chair.*) You're looking very well, and I daresay when mounted are quite a "beau cavalier." And so, my boy (*playing with his hair*), you are going abroad for the first time on active service.

George (*aside*). Every word can be heard in the next room. If they've only gone upstairs.

Marchioness. And now, my dear boy, before you go I want to give you some advice; and you mustn't despise it because I'm an old woman. We old women know a great deal more than people give us credit for. You are a soldier — so was your father — so was his father — so was mine — so was our royal founder; we were born to lead! The common people expect it from us. It is our duty. Do you not remember in the Chronicles of Froissart? (*With great enjoyment.*) I think I can quote it word for word; I've a wonderful memory for my age. (*With closed eyes.*) It was in the fifty-ninth chapter — "How Godefroy D'Alroy helde the towne of St. Amande duryng the siege before Tournay." It said "the towne was not closed but with pales, and captayne there was Sir Amory of Pauy — the Seneschall of Carcassoune — who had said it was not able to hold agaynste an hooste, when one Godefroy D'Alroy sayd that rather than he woulde depart, he woulde keepe it to the best of his power. Whereat the souldiers cheered and sayd, 'Lead us on, Sir Godefroy.' And then began a fierce assault; and they within were chased, and sought for shelter from street to street. But Godefroy stood at the gate so valyantly that the souldiers helde the towne until the commyng of the Earl of Haynault with twelve thousande men."

George (*aside*). I wish she'd go. If she once gets onto Froissart, she'll never know when to stop.

Marchioness. When my boy fights — and you will fight — he is sure to distinguish himself. It is his nature to — (*toys with his hair*) — he cannot forget his birth. And when you meet these Asiatic ruffians, who have dared to revolt, and to outrage humanity, you will strike as your ancestor Sir Galtier of Chevrault struck at Poictiers. (*Changing tone of voice as if remembering.*) Froissart mentions it thus: "Sir Galtier, with his four squires, was in the front of that battell, and there did marvels in arms. And Sir Galtier rode up to the Prince, and sayd to him — 'Sir, take your horse and ryde forth, this journey is yours. God is this daye in your handes. Gette us to the French Kynge's batayle. I think verily by his valyantesse, he woll not fly. Advance banner in the name of God and of Saynt George!' And Sir Galtier galloped forward to see his Kynge's victory, and meet his own death."

George (*aside*). If Esther hears all this!

Marchioness. There is another subject about which I should have spoken to you before this; but an absurd prudery forbade me. I may never see you more. I am old — and you — are going into battle — (*kissing his forehead with emotion*) — and this may be our last meeting. (*Noise heard within folding-doors.*) What's that?

George. Nothing — my man Dixon in there.

Marchioness. We may not meet again on this earth. I do not fear your conduct, my George, with men; but I know the temptations that beset a youth who is well born. But a true soldier, a true gentleman, should not only be without fear, but without reproach. It is easier to fight. a furious man than to forego the conquest of a love-sick girl. A thousand Sepoys slain in battle cannot redeem the honor of a man who has betrayed the confidence of a trusting woman. Think, George, what dishonor — what stain upon your manhood — to hurl a girl to shame and degradation! And what excuse for it? That she is plebeian? A man of real honor will spare the woman who has confessed her love for him as he would give quarter to an enemy he had disarmed. (*Taking his hands.*) Let my boy avoid the snares so artfully spread; and when he asks his mother to welcome the woman he has chosen for his wife, let me take her to my arms and plant a motherly kiss upon the white brow of a lady. (*Noise of a fall heard within folding doors. Rising.*) What's that?

George (*rising*). Nothing.

Marchioness. I heard a cry.

(*Folding-doors open, discovering* Esther *with* Polly, *staggering in, fainting.*)

Polly. George! George!

(George *goes up and* Esther *falls in his arms.* George *places* Esther *on sofa.* George *on her right,* Polly *on her left.*)

Marchioness (*coming down*). Who are these *women?*

Polly. Women!

Marchioness. George D'Alroy, these persons should have been sent away. How could you dare to risk your mother meeting women of their stamp?

Polly (*violently*). What does she mean? How dare she call me a woman? What's she, I'd like to know?

George (*right of sofa*). Silence, Polly! You mustn't insult my mother.

Marchioness. The insult is from you. I leave you, and I hope that time may induce me to forget this scene of degradation. (*Turning to go.*)

George. Stay, mother. (Marchioness *turns slightly away.*) Before you go (George *has raised* Esther *from sofa in his arms*) let me present to you Mrs. George D'Alroy. *My wife!*

Marchioness. Married!

George. Married.

(Marchioness *sinks into easy-chair.* George *replaces* Esther *on sofa, but still retains her hand. Three hesitating taps at door heard.* George *crosses to door, opens it, discovers* Eccles, *who enters.* George *drops down back of* Marchioness's *chair.*)

Eccles. They told us to come up. When your man came Polly was out; so I thought I should do instead. (*Calling at door.*) Come up, Sam.

(*Enter* Sam *in his Sunday clothes, with short cane and smoking a cheroot. He nods and grins* — Polly *points to* Marchioness — Sam *takes cheroot from his mouth and quickly removes his hat.*)

Eccles. Sam had just called; so we three — Sam and I, and your man, all came in the 'ansom cab together. Didn't we, Sam.

(Eccles *and* Sam *go over to the girls, and* Eccles *drops down to front of table — smilingly.*)

Marchioness (*with glasses up, to* George). Who is this?

George (*coming left of* Marchioness). My wife's father.

Marchioness. What is he?

George. A — nothing.

Eccles. I am one of nature's noblemen. Happy to see you, my lady — (*turning to her*) — now, my daughters have told me who you are — (George *turns his back in an agony as* Eccles *crosses to* Marchioness) — we old folks, fathers and mothers of the young couples, ought to make friends.

(*Holding out his dirty hand.*)

Marchioness (*shrinking back*). Go away! (Eccles *goes back to table again, disgusted.*) What's his name?

George. Eccles.

Marchioness. Eccles! Eccles! There never was an Eccles. He don't exist.

Eccles. Don't he, though? What d'ye call this?

(*Goes up again to back of table as* Sam *drops down. He is just going to take a decanter when* Sam *stops him.*)

Marchioness. No Eccles was ever born!

George. He takes the liberty of breathing notwithstanding. (*Aside.*) And I wish he wouldn't.

Marchioness. And who is the little man? Is he also Eccles?

(Sam *looks round.* Polly *gets close up to him, and looks with defiant glance at the* Marchioness.)

George. No.

Marchioness. Thank goodness! What then?

George. His name is Gerridge.

Marchioness. *Gerridge!* It breaks one's teeth. Why is he here?

George. He is making love to Polly, my wife's sister.

Marchioness. And what is he?

George. A gasman.

Marchioness. He looks it. (George *goes up to* Esther.) And what is she — the — the sister?

(Eccles, *who has been casting longing eyes at the decanter on table, edges towards it, and when he thinks no one is noticing, fills wine-glass.*)

Polly (*asserting herself indignantly*). I'm in the ballet at the Theatre Royal, Lambeth. So was Esther. We're not ashamed of what we are. We have no cause to be.

Sam. That's right, Polly! pitch into them swells! — who are they?

(Eccles *by this time has seized wine-glass, and turning his back, is about to drink, when* Hawtree *enters.* Eccles *hides glass under his coat, and pretends to be looking up at picture.*)

Hawtree (*entering*). George! (*Stops suddenly, looking round.*) So, all's known!

Marchioness (*rising*). Captain Hawtree, see me to my carriage; I am broken-hearted.

(*Takes* Hawtree's *arm, and is going up.*)

Eccles (*who has tasted the claret, spits it out with a grimace, exclaiming*). — Rot!

(Polly *goes to piano, sits on stool* — Sam, *back to audience, leaning on piano* — Eccles *exits through folding-doors.*)

George (*to* Marchioness). Don't go in anger. You may not see me again.

(Esther *rises in nervous excitement, clutching* George's *hand.* Marchioness *stops.* Esther *brings* George *down.*)

Esther (*with arm round his neck*). Oh, George! must you go?

(*They come to front of table.*)

George. Yes.

Esther. I can't leave you. I'll go with you!

George. Impossible! The country is too unsettled.

Esther. May I come after you?

George. Yes.

Esther (*with her head on his shoulder*). I may.

Marchioness (*coming down,* Hawtree *at door*). It is his duty to go. His honor calls him. The honor of his family — *our* honor.

Esther. But I love him so! Pray don't be angry with me!

Hawtree (*looking at watch, and coming down*). George!

George. I must go, love.

(Hawtree *goes up to door again.*)

Marchioness (*advancing*). Let me arm you, George — let your mother, as in the days of old. There is blood — and blood, my son. See, your wife cries when she should be proud of you!

George. My Esther is all that is good and noble. No lady born to a coronet could be gentler or more true. Esther, my wife, fetch me my sword, and buckle my belt around me.

Esther (*clinging to him*). No, no; I can't!

George. Try. (*Whispers to* Esther.) To please my mother. (*To* Marchioness.) You shall see. (Esther *totters up stage,* Polly *assisting her, and brings down his sword. As* Esther *is trying to buckle his belt, he whispers.*) I've left money for you, my darling. My lawyer will call on you to-morrow. Forgive me! I tried hard to tell you we were ordered for India; but when the time came, my heart failed me, and I —

(Esther, *before she can succeed in fastening his sword-belt, reels, and falls fainting in his arms.* Polly *hurries to her.* Sam *standing at piano, looking frightened;* Hawtree *with hand upon handle of door;* Marchioness *looking on, at right of* George.)

ACT III.

Scene. — *The room in Stangate (as in Act I). Same furniture as in Act I, with exception of piano, with roll of music tied up on it, in place of bureau. Map of India over mantel-piece. Sword with crape knot, spurs, and cap, craped, hanging over chimney-*

piece. Portrait of D'Alroy (*large*) *on mantel-piece. Berceaunette, and child, with coral, in it.* Polly's *bonnet and shawl hanging on peg. Small tin saucepan in fender, fire alight, and kettle on it. Two candles* (*tallow*) *in sticks, one of which is broken about three inches from the top and hangs over. Slate and pencil on table. Jug on table, bandbox and ballet skirt on table.*

(*At rise of curtain* Polly *discovered at table, back of stage. Comes down and places skirt in bandbox. She is dressed in black.*)

Polly (*placing skirt in box, and leaning her chin upon her hand*). There — there's the dress for poor Esther in case she gets the engagement, which I don't suppose she will. It's too good luck, and good luck never comes to her, poor thing. (*Goes up to back of cradle.*) Baby's asleep still. How good he looks — as good as if he were dead, like his poor father; and alive too, at the same time, like his dear self. Ah! dear me; it's a strange world. (*Sits in chair right of table, feeling in pocket for money.*) Four and elevenpence. That must do for to-day and to-morrow. Esther is going to bring in the rusks for Georgey. (*Takes up slate.*) Three, five — eight, and four — twelve, one shilling — father can only have twopence. (*This all to be said in one breath.*) He must make do with that till Saturday, when I get my salary. If Esther gets the engagement, I shan't have many more salaries to take; I shall leave the stage and retire into private life. I wonder if I shall like private life, and if private life will like me. It will seem so strange being no longer Miss Mary Eccles — but Mrs. Samuel Gerridge. (*Writes it on slate.*) "Mrs. Samuel Gerridge." (*Laughs bashfully.*) La! to think of my being Mrs. Anybody! How annoyed Susan Smith will be! (*Writing on slate.*) "Mrs. Samuel Gerridge presents her compliments to Miss Susan Smith, and Mrs. Samuel Gerridge requests the favor of Miss Susan Smith's company to tea, on Tuesday evening next, at Mrs. Samuel Gerridge's house." (*Pause.*) Poor Susan! (*Beginning again.*) "P.S. — Mrs. Samuel Gerridge —"

(*Knock heard at room door;* Polly *starts.*)

Sam (*without*). Polly, open the door.

Polly. Sam! come in.

Sam (*without*). I can't.

Polly. Why not?

Sam. I've got somethin' on my 'ead.

(Polly *rises and opens door.* Sam *enters, carrying two rolls of wall-paper, one in each hand, and a small table on his head, which he deposits down stage, then puts roll of paper on piano, as also his cap.* Sam *has a rule-pocket in corduroys.*)

Polly (*shuts door*). What's that?

Sam (*pointing to table with pride*). Furniture. How are you, my Polly? (*Kissing her.*) You look handsomer than ever this morning. (*Dances and sings.*) "Tid-dle-di-tum-ti-di-do."

Polly. What's the matter, Sam? Are you mad?

Sam. No, 'appy — much the same thing.

Polly. Where have you been these two days?

Sam (*all excitement*). That's just what I'm goin' to tell yer. Polly, my pet, my brightest batswing and most brilliant burner, what do yer think?

Polly. Oh, do go on, Sam, or I'll slap your face.

Sam. Well, then, you've 'eard me speak of old Binks, the plumber, glazier, and gasfitter, who died six months ago?

Polly. Yes.

Sam (*sternly and deliberately*). I've bought 'is business.

Polly. No!

Sam (*excitedly*). Yes, of 'is widow, old Mrs. Binks — so much down, and so much more at the end of the year. (*Dances and sings.*)

Ri-ti-toodle
Roodle-oodle
Ri-ti-tooral-lay.

Polly. La, Sam.

Sam (*pacing stage up and down*). Yes; I've bought the goodwill, fixtures, fittin's, stock, rolls of gas-pipe, and sheets of lead. (*Jumps on table, quickly facing* Polly.) Yes, Polly, I'm a tradesman with a shop — a master tradesman. (*Coming to* Polly *seriously.*) All I want to complete the premises is a missus.

(*Tries to kiss her. She pushes him away.*)

Polly. Sam, don't be foolish.

Sam (*arm round her waist*). Come and be Mrs. Sam Gerridge, Polly, my patent-safety-day-and-night-light. You'll furnish me completely.

(Polly *goes up,* Sam *watching her admiringly; he then sees slate, snatches it up and looks at it. She snatches it from him with a shriek, and rubs out writing, looking daggers at him,* Sam *laughing.*)

Sam. Only to think now.

(*Putting arm round her waist,* Polly *pouting.*)

Polly. Don't be a goose.

Sam (*going towards table*). I spent the whole of yesterday lookin' up furniture. Now I bought that a bargain, and I brought it 'ere to show you for your approval. I've bought lots of other things, and I'll bring 'em all 'ere to show you for your approval.

Polly. I couldn't think what had become of you. (*Seated right of table.*)

Sam. Couldn't yer? Oh, I say, I want yer to choose the new paper for the little back-parlor just behind the shop, you know. Now what d'yer think of this?

(*Fetching a pattern from piano and unrolling it.*)

Polly. No, I don't like that. (Sam *fetches the other, a flaming pattern.*) Ah! that's neat.

Sam. Yes, that's neat and quiet. I'll new-paper it, and new-furnish it, and it shall all be bran-new.

(*Puts paper on top of piano.*)

Polly. But won't it cost a lot of money?

Sam (*bravely*). I can work for it. With customers in the shop, and you in the back-parlor, I can work like fifty men. (*Sits on table, beckons* Polly *to him; she comes left of table,* Sam *puts his arm round* Polly, *sentimentally.*) Only fancy, at night, when the shop's closed, and the shutters are up, counting out the till together! (*Changing his manner.*) Besides, that isn't all I've been doin'. I've been writin', and what I've written, I've got printed.

Polly. No!

Sam. True.

Polly. You've been writing — about me? (*Delighted.*)

Sam. No — about the shop. (Polly, *disgusted.*) Here it is. (*Takes roll of circulars from pocket of his canvas slop.*) Yer mustn't laugh — yer know — it's my first attempt. I wrote it the night before last; and when I thought of you the words seemed to flow like — red-hot solder. (*Reads.*) Hem! "Samuel Gerridge takes this opportunity of informin' the nobility, gentry, and inhabitants of the Borough-road —"

Polly. The Borough-road?

Sam. Well, there ain't many of the nobility and gentry as lives in the Borough-road, but it pleases the inhabitants to make 'em believe yer think so (*resuming*) — "of informin' the nobility, gentry, and inhabitants of the Borough-road, and its vicinity," and "its vicinity." (*Looking at her.*) Now I think that's rather good, eh?

Polly. Yes. (*Doubtfully.*) I've heard worse.

Sam. I first thought of saying neighbor'ood; but then vicinity sounds so much more genteel (*resuming*) — "*and* its vicinity, that 'e has entered upon the business of the late Mr. Binks, 'is relict, the present Mrs. B., 'avin' disposed to 'im of the same" — now listen, Polly, because it gets interestin' — "S. G.—"

Polly. S. G. Who's he?

Sam (*looking at* Polly *with surprise*). Why, me. S. G. — Samuel Gerridge — me, us. We're S. G. Now don't interrupt me, or you'll cool my metal, and then I can't work. "S. G. 'opes that, by a constant attention to business, and" — mark this — "by supplyin' the best articles at the most reasonable prices, to merit a continuance of those favors which it will ever be 'is constant study to deserve." There! (*Turning on table triumphantly.*) Stop a bit, — there's a little bit more yet. "Bell-'angin', gas-fittin', plumbin', and glazin', as usual." There! and it's all my own!

(*Puts circular on mantel-piece, and crossing contemplates it.*)

Polly. Beautiful, Sam. It looks very attractive from here, don't it?

Sam (*Postman's knock.*) There's the postman. I'll go. I shall send some of these out by post.

(*Goes off and returns with letter.*)

Polly (*taking it*). Oh, for Esther. I know who it's from. (*Places letter on mantel-piece. At chair left of table.* Sam *sits corner of table, reading circular. Seriously.*) Sam, who do you think was here last night?

Sam. Who?

Polly. Captain Hawtree.

Sam (*deprecatingly*). Oh, 'im! — Come back from India, I suppose.

Polly. Yes, — luckily Esther was out.

Sam. I never liked that long swell. He was a 'uppish, conceited —

Polly (*sitting at end of table*). Oh, he's better than he used to be — he's a major now. He's only been in England a fortnight.

Sam. Did he tell yer anything about De Alroy?

Polly (*leaning against table end*). Yes; he said he was riding out not far from the cantonment, and was surrounded by a troop of Sepoy cavalry, which took him prisoner, and galloped off with him.

Sam. But about 'is death?

Polly. Oh! (*hiding her face*) that he said was believed to be too terrible to mention.

Sam (*crossing to* Polly *at table*). Did 'e tell yer anything else?

Polly. No; he asked a lot of questions, and I told him everything. How poor Esther had taken her widowhood and what a dear, good baby the baby was, and what a comfort to us all, and how Esther had come back to live with us again.

Sam (*sharply*). And the reason for it?

Polly (*looking down*). Yes.

Sam. How your father got all the money that 'e'd left for Esther?

Polly (*sharply*). Don't say any more about that, Sam.

Sam. Oh! I only think Captain 'Awtree ought to know where the money *did* go to, and you shouldn't try and screen your father, and let 'im suppose that you and Esther spent it all.

Polly. I told him — I told him — I told him.

(*Angrily.*)

Sam. Did you tell 'im that your father was always at 'armonic meetin's at taverns, and 'ad 'arf cracked 'isself with drink, and was always singin' the songs and makin' the speeches 'e 'eard there, and was always goin' on about 'is wrongs as one of the workin' classes? 'E's a pretty one for one of the workin' classes, 'e is! 'Asn't done a stroke of work these twenty year. Now, I *am* one of the workin' classes, but I *don't* 'owl about it. I work, I don't spout.

Polly. Hold your tongue, Sam. I won't have you say any more against poor father. He has his faults, but he's a very clever man. (*Sighing.*)

Sam. Ah! What else did Captain Hawtree say?

Polly. He advised us to apply to Mr. D'Alroy's mother.

Sam. What! the Marquissy? And what did you say to that?

Polly. I said that Esther wouldn't hear of it. And so the Major said that he'd write to Esther, and I suppose this is the letter.

Sam. Now, Polly, come along and choose the paper for the little back-parlor.

(*Goes to table and takes it up to wall behind door.*)

Polly (*rising*). Can't. Who's to mind baby?

Sam. The *baby?* Oh, I forgot all about 'im. (*Goes to cradle.*) I see yer! (*Goes to window casually.*) There's your father comin' down the street. Won't 'e mind 'im?

Polly (*going up*). I daresay he will. If I promise him an extra sixpence on Saturday. (Sam *opens window.*) Hi! Father! (Polly *goes to cradle.*)

Sam (*aside*). 'E looks down in the mouth, 'e does. I suppose 'e's 'ad no drink this morning. (*Goes to* Polly.)

Enter Eccles *in shabby black. Pauses on entering, looks at* Sam, *turns away in disgust, takes off hat, places it on piano, and shambles across stage. Takes chair left of table, places it, and sits before fire.*)

Polly (*goes to* Eccles). Come in to stop a bit, father?

Eccles. No; not for long. (Sam *comes down.*) Good morning, Samuel. Going back to work? that's right, my boy — stick to it. (*Pokes fire.*) Stick to it — nothing like it.

Sam (*aside*). Now, isn't that too bad? — No, Mr. Eccles. I've knocked off for the day.

Eccles (*waving poker*). That's bad, — that's very bad! Nothing like work — for the young. I don't work so much as I used to, myself, but I like to (Polly *sitting on corner of table up left*) see the young 'uns at it. It does me good, and it does them good, too. What does the poet say?

(*Rising, impressively, and leaning on table.*)

"A carpenter said tho' that was well spoke,
It was better by far to defend it with hoak.
A currier, wiser than both put together,
Said say what you will, there is nothing like labor.
For a' that and a' that,
Your ribbon, gown and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The working man's the gold for a' that."

(*Sits again, triumphantly wagging his head.*)

Sam (*aside*). This is one of the public-house loafers, that wants all the wages and none of the work, an idle old —

(*Goes in disgust to piano, puts on cap, and takes rolls of paper under his arm.*)

Polly (*to* Eccles). Esther will be in by-and-by. (*Persuasively.*) Do, father.

Eccles. No, no, I tell you I won't!

Polly (*whispering, arm round his neck*). And I'll give you sixpence extra on Saturday.

(Eccles's *face relaxes into a broad grin.* Polly *gets hat and cloak from peg.*)

Eccles. Ah! you sly little puss, you know how to get over your poor old father.

Sam (*aside*). Yes, with sixpence.

Polly (*putting on bonnet and cloak at door*). Give the cradle a rock if baby cries.

Sam (*crossing to* Eccles). If you should 'appen to want employment or amusement, Mr. Eccles, just cast your eye over this. (*Puts circular on table, then joins* Polly *at door.*) Stop a bit, I've forgot to give the baby one.

(*Throws circular into cradle. Exeunt,* Polly *first.* Eccles *takes out pipe from pocket, looks into it, then blows through it making a squeaking noise, and finishes by tenderly placing it on table. He then hunts all his pockets for tobacco, finally finding a little paper packet containing a screw of tobacco in his waistcoat pocket, which he also places on table after turning up the corner of the tablecloth for the purpose of emptying the contents of his pocket of the few remnants of past screws of tobacco on to the bare table and mixing a little out of the packet with it and filling pipe. He then brushes all that remains on the table into the paper packet, pinches it up, and carefully replaces it in waistcoat pocket. Having put the pipe into his* *mouth, he looks about for a light, across his shoulder and under table, though never rising from the chair; seeing nothing, his face assumes an expression of comic anguish. Turning to table he angrily replaces tablecloth and then notices* Sam's *circular. His face relaxes into a smile, and picking it up he tears the circular in half, makes a spill of it, and lighting it at fire, stands, with his back to fireplace, and smokes vigorously.)*

Eccles. Poor Esther. Nice market she's brought her pigs to — ugh! Mind the baby indeed! What good is he to me? That fool of a girl to throw away all her chances! — a *honorable-hess* — and her father not to have on him the price of a pint of early beer or a quartern of cool, refreshing gin! Stopping in here to rock a young honorable! Cuss him!

(*Business, puffs smoke in baby's face, rocking cradle.*)

Are we slaves, we working men? (*Sings savagely.*)

"Britons never, never, never shall be —"

(*Nodding his head sagaciously, sits by table.*) I won't stand this, I've writ to the old cat — I mean to the Marquissy — to tell her that her daughter-in-law and her grandson is almost starving. That fool Esther is too proud to write to her for money. I hate pride — it's *beastly!* (*Rising.*) There's no beastly pride about me. (*Goes up, smacking his lips.*) I'm as dry as a lime-kiln. (*Takes up jug.*) Milk! — (*with disgust*) for this young aristocratic pauper. Everybody in the house is sacrificed for him! (*At foot of cradle, with arms on chair back.*) And to think that a *working man*, and a member of the Committee of Banded Brothers for the Regeneration of Human Kind, by means of equal diffusion of intelligence and equal division of property, should be thusty, while this cub — (*Draws aside curtain, and looks at child.. After a pause.*) That there coral he's got round his neck is *gold*, real *gold!* (*With hand on knob at end of cradle.*) Oh, Society! Oh, Governments! Oh, Class Legislation! — *is this right?* Shall this mindless wretch enjoy himself, while sleeping, with a jewelled gawd, and his poor old grandfather want the price of half a pint? *No!* it shall not be! Rather than see it, I will myself resent this outrage on the rights of man! and in this holy crusade of class against class, of the weak and lowly against the *powerful and strong* — (*pointing to child*) — I will strike one blow for freedom! (*Goes to back of cradle.*) He's asleep. It will fetch ten bob round the corner; and if the Marquissy gives us anything it can be got out with some o' that. (*Steals coral.*) Lie still, my darling! — it's grandfather a-watchin' over you —

"Who ran to catch me when I fell,
And kicked the place to make it well?
My grandfather!"

(*Rocking cradle with one hand; leaves it quickly, and as he takes hat off piano* Esther *enters. She is dressed as a widow, her face pale, and her manner quick and imperious. She carries a parcel and paper bag of rusks in her hand; she puts parcel on table, goes to cradle, kneels down and kisses child.*)

Eccles. My lovey had a nice walk? You should wrap yourself up well, — you are so liable to catch cold.

Esther. My Georgey? — Where's his coral? (Eccles, *going to door, fumbles with lock nervously, and is going out as* Esther *speaks.*) Gone! — Father! (*Rising* — Eccles *stops.*) The child's coral — where is it?

Eccles (*confused*). Where's what, duckey?

Esther. The coral! You've got it, — I know it! Give it me! (*Quickly and imperiously.*) *Give it me!* (Eccles *takes coral from his pocket and gives it back.*) If you *dare* to touch *my* child — (*Goes to cradle.*)

Eccles. Esther! (*Going quickly to piano* *and banging hat on it.*) Am I not your father? —

(Esther *gets round to front of table.*)

Esther. And I am his mother!

Eccles (*coming to her*). Do you bandy words with me, you pauper! you pauper!! you pauper!!! to whom I have given shelter — shelter to you and your brat! I've a good mind —

(*Raising his clenched fist.*)

Esther (*confronting him*). If you dare! I am no longer your little drudge — your frightened servant. When mother died — (Eccles *changes countenance and cowers beneath her glance*) — and I was so high, I tended you, and worked for you — and you beat me. That time is past. I am a woman — I am a wife — a widow — a *mother!* Do you think I will let you outrage *him?* (*Pointing to cradle.*) *Touch me if you dare!*

(*Advancing a step.*)

Eccles (*bursting into tears and coming down*). And this is my own child, which I nussed when a babby, and sung "Cootsicum Coo" to afore she could speak. (*Gets hat from piano, and returns a step or two.*) Hon. Mrs. De Alroy (Esther *drops down behind chair by table*), I forgive you for all that you have said. I forgive you for all that you have done. In everything that I have done I have acted with the best intentions. May the babe in that cradle never treat you as you have this day *tret* a grey 'aired father. May he never cease to love and *h*onor you, as you have ceased to love and *h*onor me, after all that I have done for you, and the position to which I have raised you by my own *industry*. (*Goes to door.*) May he never behave to you like the bad daughters of King Lear; and may you never live to feel how much more sharper than a serpent's (*slight pause as if remembering quotation*) scale it is to have a thankless child! (*Exit.*)

Esther (*kneeling back of cradle*). My darling! (*Arranging bed and placing coral to baby's lips, then to her own.*) Mamma's come back to her own. Did she stay away from him so long? (*Rises, and looks at sabre, etc.*) My George! to think that you can never look upon his face or hear his voice. My brave, gallant, handsome husband! My lion and my love! (*Comes down, pacing stage.*) Oh! to be a soldier, and to fight the wretches who destroyed him — who took my darling from me! (*Action of cutting with sabre.*) To gallop miles upon their upturned faces. (*Crossing with action — breaks down sobbing at mantelpiece — sees letter.*) What's this? Captain Hawtree's hand. (*Sitting in chair, reads, at left hand of table.*) "My dear Mrs. D'Alroy, — I returned to England less than a fortnight ago. I have some papers and effects of my poor friend's, which I am anxious to deliver to you, and I beg of you to name a day when I can call with them and see you; at the same time let me express my deepest sympathy with your affliction. Your husband's loss was mourned by every man in the regiment. (Esther *lays the letter on her heart, and then resumes reading.*) I have heard with great pain of the pecuniary embarrassments into which accident and imprudence of others have placed you. I trust you will not consider me, one of poor George's oldest comrades and friends, either intrusive or impertinent in sending the enclosed (*she takes out a cheque*), and in hoping that, should any further difficulties arise, you will inform me of them, and remember that I am, dear Mrs. D'Alroy, now, and always, your faithful and sincere friend, Arthur Hawtree." (Esther *goes to cradle and bends over it.*) Oh, *his* boy, if you could read it!

(*Sobs, with head on head of cradle.*)

(*Enter* Polly.)

Polly. Father gone!

Esther. Polly, you look quite flurried. (Polly *laughs, and whispers to* Esther, *near head of table, taking* Polly *in her arms and kissing her.*) So soon? Well — my darling, I hope you may be happy.

Polly. Yes. Sam's going to speak to father about it this afternoon. (*Crosses round table, putting rusks in saucepan.*) Did you see the agent, dear?

Esther (*sits at table*). Yes; the manager didn't come — he broke his appointment again.

Polly (*sits opposite at table*). Nasty, rude fellow!

Esther. The agent said it didn't matter, he thought I should get the engagement. He'll only give me thirty shillings a week, though.

Polly. But you said that two pounds was the regular salary.

Esther. Yes, but they know I'm poor, and want the engagement, and so take advantage of me.

Polly. Never mind, Esther. I put the dress in that bandbox. It looks almost as good as new.

Esther. I've had a letter from Captain Hawtree.

Polly. I know, dear; he came here last night.

Esther. A dear good letter — speaking of George, and enclosing a cheque for thirty pounds.

Polly. Oh, how kind! Don't you tell father.

(*Noise of carriage-wheels without.*)

Esther. I shan't.

(Eccles *enters, breathless.* Esther *and* Polly *rise.*)

Eccles. It's the Marquissy in her coach. (Esther *puts on the lid of band-box.*) Now, girls, do be civil to her, and she may do something for us. (*Places hat on piano.*) I see the coach as I was coming out of the "Rainbow."

(*Hastily pulls an old comb out of his pocket, and puts his hair in order.*)

Esther. The Marquise!

(Esther *comes down to end of table,* Polly *holding her hand.*)

Eccles (*at door*). This way, my lady — up them steps. They're rather awkward for the likes o' you; but them as is poor and lowly must do as best they can with steps and circumstances.

(*Enter* Marquise. *She surveys the place with aggressive astonishment.*)

Marquise (*going down, half aside*). What a hole! And to think that my grandson should breathe such an atmosphere, and be contaminated by such associations! (*To* Eccles, *who is a little up.*) Which is the young woman who married my son?

Esther. I am Mrs. George D'Alroy, widow of George D'Alroy. Who are you?

Marquise. I am his mother, the Marquise de St. Maur.

Esther (*with the grand air*). Be seated, I beg.

(Eccles *takes chair from right centre, which* Esther *immediately seizes as* Sam *enters with an easy chair on his head, which he puts down, not seeing* Marquise, *who instantly sits down in it, concealing it completely.*)

Sam (*astonished*). It's the Marquissy! (*Looking at her.*) My eye! These aristocrats are fine women — plenty of 'em — (*describing circle*) quality and quantity!

Polly. Go away, Sam; you'd better come back.

(Eccles *nudges him and bustles him towards door. Exit* Sam. Eccles *shuts door on him.*)

Eccles (*coming down right of* Marquise, *rubbing his hands*). If we'd a-know'd your ladyship 'ad been a-coming we'd a' 'ad the place cleaned up a bit.

(*With hands on chair back, in lower right-hand corner. He gets round to right, behind* Marquise, *who turns the chair slightly from him.*)

Polly. Hold your tongue, father!

(Eccles, *crushed.*)

Marquise (*to* Esther). You remember me, do you not?

Esther. Perfectly, though I only saw you once. (*Seating herself en grande dame.*) May I ask what has procured me the honor of this visit?

Marquise. I was informed that you

were in want, and I came to offer you assistance.

Esther. I thank you for your offer, and the delicate consideration for my feelings with which it is made. I need no assistance.

(Eccles *groans and leans on piano.*)

Marquise. A letter that I received last night informed me that you did.

Esther. May I ask if that letter came from Captain Hawtree?

Marquise. No — from this person — your father, I think.

Esther (*to* Eccles). How dare you interfere in my affairs?

Eccles. My lovey, I did it with the best intentions.

Marquise. Then you will not accept assistance from me?

Esther. No.

Polly (*aside to* Esther, *holding her hand*). Bless you, my darling.

(Polly *standing beside her.*)

Marquise. But you have a child — a son — my grandson. (*With emotion.*)

Esther. Master D'Alroy wants for nothing.

Polly (*aside*). And never shall.

(Eccles *groans and turns on to piano.*)

Marquise. I came here to propose that my grandson should go back with me. (Polly *rushes up to cradle.*)

Esther (*rising defiantly*). What! part with my boy! I'd sooner die!

Marquise. You can see him when you wish. As for money, I —

Esther. Not for ten thousand million worlds — not for ten thousand million marchionesses!

Eccles. Better do what the good lady asks you, my dear; she's advising you for your own good, and for the child's likewise.

Marquise. Surely you cannot intend to bring up my son's son in a place like this?

Esther. I do. (*Goes up to cradle.*)

Eccles. It *is* a poor place, and we are poor people, sure enough. We ought not to fly in the faces of our pastors and masters — our pastresses and mistresses.

Polly (*aside*). Oh, hold your tongue, do! (*Up at cradle.*)

Esther (*before cradle*). Master George D'Alroy will remain with his mother. The offer to take him from her is an insult to his dead father and to him.

Eccles (*aside*). He don't seem to feel it, stuck-up little beast.

Marquise. But you have no money — how can you rear him? — how can you educate him? — how can you live?

Esther (*tearing dress from bandbox*). Turn columbine, — go on the stage again and dance.

Marquise (*rising*). You are insolent — you forget that I am a lady.

Esther. You forget that I am a mother. Do you dare to offer to buy my child — *his* breathing image, *his* living memory — with money? (*Crosses to door and throws it open.*) There is the door — go!

(*Picture.*)

Eccles (*to* Marquise, *who has risen, aside*). Very sorry, my lady, as you should be tret in this way, which was not my wishes.

Marquise. Silence! (Eccles *retreats, putting back chair.* Marquise *goes up to door.*) Mrs. D'Alroy, if anything could have increased my sorrow for the wretched marriage my poor son was *decoyed* into, it would be your conduct this day to his mother. (*Exit.*)

Esther (*falling into* Polly's *arms*). Oh, Polly! Polly!

Eccles (*looking after her*). To go away and not to leave a sov. behind her! (*Running up to open door.*) Cat! Cat! Stingy old cat!

(*Almost runs to fire, and pokes it violently; carriage-wheels heard without.*)

Esther. I'll go to my room and lie down. Let me have the baby, or that old woman may come back and steal him.

(*Exit* Esther, *and* Polly *follows with the baby.*)

Eccles. Well, women is the obstinatest devils as never wore horseshoes. Children? Beasts! Beasts!

(*Enter* Sam *and* Polly.)

Sam. Come along, Polly, and let's get it over at once. (Sam *places cap on piano, and goes to table.* Polly *takes bandbox from table, and places it up stage.*) Now, Mr. Eccles (Eccles *turns suddenly, facing* Sam), since you've been talkin' on family matters, I'd like to 'ave a word with yer, so take this opportunity to —

Eccles (*waving his hand grandly*). Take what you like, and then order more (*rising, and leaning over table*), Samuel Gerridge. That hand is a hand that has never turned its back on a friend, or a bottle to give him.

(*Sings, front of table.*)

"I'll stand by my friend,
I'll stand by my friend,
I'll stand by my friend,
If he'll stand to me — me, genelmen!"

Sam. Well, Mr. Eccles, sir, it's this —

Polly (*aside, coming down to* Sam). Don't tell him too sudden, Sam — it might shock his feelings.

Sam. It's this; yer know that for the last four years I've been keepin' company with Mary — Polly.

(*Turning to her and smiling.* Eccles *drops into chair as if shot.*)

Eccles. Go it! go it! strike home, young man! Strike on this grey head! (*Sings.*) "Britons, strike home!" Here (*tapping his chest*), to my heart! Don't spare me! Have a go at my grey hairs. Pull 'em — pull 'em out! A long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together!

(*Cries, and drops his face on arm, upon table.*)

Polly. Oh, father! I wouldn't hurt your feelings for the world.

(*Patting his head.*)

Sam. No, Mr. Eccles, I don't want to 'urt your feelin's, but I'm a-goin' to enter upon a business. Here's a circular. (*Offering one.*)

Eccles (*indignantly*). Circ'lars. What are circ'lars compared to a father's feelings?

Sam. And I want Polly to name the day, sir, and so I ask you —

Eccles. This is 'ard, this is 'ard. One of my daughters marries a soger. The other goes a-gasfitting.

Sam (*annoyed*). The business which will enable me to maintain a wife is that of the late Mr. Binks, plumber, glazier, etc.

Eccles (*rising, sings. Air, "Lost Rosabelle."*)

"They have given thee to a plumber,
They have broken every vow,
They have given thee to a plumber,
And my heart, my heart is breaking now."

(*Drops into chair again.*)

Now, genelmen!

(Sam *thrusts circulars into his pocket, and turns away angrily.*)

Polly. You know, father, you can come and see me. (*Leans over him.*)

Sam (*sotto voce*). No, no.

(*Motions to* Polly.)

Eccles (*looking up*). So I can, and that's a comfort. (*Shaking her hand.*) And you can come and see me, and that's a comfort. I'll come and see you often — very often — every day (Sam *turns up stage in horror*), and crack a fatherly bottle (*rising*), and shed a friendly tear.

(*Wipes eyes with dirty pocket-handkerchief, which he pulls from breast pocket.*)

Polly. Do, father, do.

(*Goes up and gets tea-tray.*)

Sam (*with a gulp*). Yes, Mr. Eccles, do.

(*Goes to* Polly *and gesticulates behind tray.*)

Eccles. I will. (*Goes to centre of stage.*) And this it is to be a father. I would part with any of my children for their own good, readily — if I was paid for it. (*Goes to right corner; sings.*) "For I know that the angels are whispering to me" — me, genelmen!

(Polly *gets tea-things.*)

Sam. I'll try and make Polly a good husband, and anything that I can do to prove it (*lowering his voice*), in the way of spirituous liquors and tobacco (*slip-

ping coin into his hand, unseen by Polly) shall be done.

Eccles (*lightening up and placing his left hand on* Sam's *head*).

> "Be kind to thy father,
> Wherever you be,
> For he is a blessing
> And credit to thee — thee, genelmen."

(*Gets to centre of stage.*) Well, my children — bless you, take the blessing of a grey-'aired father. (Polly *looking from one to the other.*) Samuel Gerridge, she shall be thine. (*Mock heroically, looking at money.*) You shall be his wife (*looking at* Polly) and you (*looking at* Sam) shall be her husband — for a husband I know no fitter — no "gas-fitter" man. (*Runs to piano and takes hat; goes to door, looks comically pathetic at* Sam *and* Polly, *puts on hat and comes towards centre of stage.*) I've a friend waiting for me round the corner, which I want to have a word with; and may you never know how much more sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a marriageable daughter. (*Sings.*)

> "When I heard she was married,
> I breathed not a tone,
> The h'eyes of all round me
> Was fixed on my h'own;
> I flew to my chamber
> To hide my despair,
> I tore the bright circlet
> Of gems from my hair.
> When I heard she was married,
> When I heard she was married —"

(*Breaks down. Exit.*)

Polly (*drying her eyes*). There, Sam. I always told you that though father had his faults, his heart was in the right place.

Sam. Poor Polly.

(*Crosses to fireplace. Knock at door.*)

Polly (*top of table*). Come in.

(*Enter* Hawtree.)

Major Hawtree.

(Sam *turns away as they shake hands.*)

Hawtree. I met the Marquise's carriage on the bridge. Has she been here?

(Sam *at fire, with back to it.*)

Polly. Yes.

Hawtree. What happened?

Polly. Oh, she wanted to take away the child. (*At head of table.*)

Sam. In the coach.

(Polly *sets tea-things.*)

Hawtree. And what did Mrs. D'Alroy say to that?

Sam. Mrs. D'Alroy said that she'd see 'er blowed first! (Polly *pushes* Sam) — or words to that effect.

Hawtree. I'm sorry to hear this; I had hoped — however, that's over.

Polly (*sitting left of table*). Yes, it's over; and I hope we shall hear no more about it. Want to take away the child, indeed — like her impudence! What next! (*Getting ready tea-things.*) Esther's gone to lie down. I shan't wake her up for tea, though she's had nothing to eat all day.

Sam (*head of table*). Shall I fetch some shrimps?

Polly. No. What made you think of shrimps?

Sam. They're a relish, and consolin' — at least I always found 'em so.

(*Check lights, gradually.*)

Polly. I won't ask you to take tea with us, Major, — you're too grand.

(Sam *motions approbation to* Polly, *not wanting* Hawtree *to remain.*)

Hawtree (*placing hat on piano*). Not at all. I shall be most happy. (*Aside.*) 'Pon my word, these are very good sort of people. I'd no idea —

Sam (*points to* Hawtree). 'He's a-goin' to stop to tea — well, I ain't.

(*Goes up to window and sits.* Hawtree *crosses and sits right at table.*)

Polly. Sam! Sam! (*Pause — he says* Eh?) Pull down the blind and light the gas.

Sam. No, don't light up; I like this sort of dusk. It's unbusiness-like, but pleasant.

(Sam *cuts enormous slice of bread and hands it on point of knife to* Hawtree. *Cuts small lump of butter and hands it on point of knife to* Hawtree, *who looks at it through eye-glass, then takes it.* Sam *then helps himself.* Polly *meantime has poured out tea in two cups, and one saucer for* Sam, *sugars them, and then hands cup and saucer to* Hawtree, *who has both hands full. He takes it awkwardly and places it on table.* Polly, *having only one spoon, tastes* Sam's *tea, then stirs* Hawtree's, *attracting his attention by doing so. He looks into his tea-cup.* Polly *stirs her own tea, and drops spoon into* Hawtree's *cup, causing it to spurt in his eye. He drops eye-glass and wipes his eyes.*)

Polly (*making tea*). Sugar, Sam! (Sam *takes tea and sits facing fire.*) Oh, there isn't any milk — it'll be here directly, it's just his time.

Voice (*outside; rattle of milk-pails*). Mia-oow.

Polly. There he is. (*Knock at door.*) Oh, I know; I owe him fourpence. (*Feeling in her pocket.*) Sam, have you got fourpence? (*Knock again, louder.*)

Sam. No (*his mouth full*), — I ain't got no fourpence.

Polly. He's very impatient. Come in!

(*Enter* George, *his face bronzed, and in full health. He carries a milk-can in his hand, which, after putting his hat on piano, he places on table.*)

George. A fellow hung this on the railings, so I brought it in.

(Polly *sees him, and gradually sinks down under the table, right. Then* Sam, *with his mouth full, and bread and butter in hand, does the same, left.* Hawtree *pushes himself back a space, in chair; remains motionless.* George *astonished. Picture.*)

George. What's the matter with you?

Hawtree (*rising*). George!

George. Hawtree! You here?

Polly (*under table*). O-o-o-o-oh! the ghost! — the ghost!

Sam. It shan't hurt you, Polly. Perhaps it's only indigestion.

Hawtree. Then you are not dead?

George. Dead, no. Where's my wife?

Hawtree. You were reported killed.

George. It wasn't true.

Hawtree. Alive! My old friend alive!

George. And well.

(*Shakes hands.*)

Landed this morning. Where's my wife?

Sam (*who has popped his head from under tablecloth*). He ain't dead, Poll — he's alive.

(Polly *rises from under the table slowly.*)

Polly (*pause; approaches him, touches him, retreats*). George! (*He nods.*) George! George!

George. Yes! Yes!

Polly. Alive! — My dear George! — Oh, my dear brother! — (*Looking at him intensely.*) — Alive! — (*Going to him.*) Oh, my dear, dear brother! — (*In his arms.*) — how could you go and do so?

(*Laughs hysterically.*)

(Sam *goes down left.* George *places* Polly *in his arms.* Sam *kisses* Polly's *hand violently.* Hawtree *comes up, stares — business.* Sam *goes left with a stamp of his foot.*)

George. Where's Esther?

Hawtree. Here — in this house.

George. Here! — doesn't she know I'm back?

Polly. No; how should she?

George (*to* Hawtree). Didn't you get my telegram?

Hawtree. No; where from?

George. Southampton! I sent it to the Club.

Hawtree. I haven't been there these three days.

Polly (*hysterically*). Oh, my dear, dear, dear dead-and-gone! — come-back-all-alive-oh, brother George!

(George *passes her.*)

Sam. Glad to see yer, sir.

GEORGE. Thank you, Gerridge. (*Shakes hands.*) Same to you — but Esther?

POLLY (*back to audience, and 'kerchief to her eyes*). She's asleep in her room.

(GEORGE *is going;* POLLY *stops him.*)

POLLY. You mustn't see her.

GEORGE. Not see her! — after this long absence! — why not?

HAWTREE. She's ill to-day. She has been greatly excited. The news of your death, which we all mourned, has shaken her terribly.

GEORGE. Poor girl! Poor girl!

POLLY. Oh, we all cried so when you died! — (*crying*) — and now you're alive again, I want to cry ever so much more. (*Crying.*)

HAWTREE. We must break the news to her gently and by degrees.

(*Crosses behind, to fire, taking his tea with him.*)

SAM. Yes, if you turn the tap on to full pressure, she'll explode.

(SAM *turns to* HAWTREE, *who is just raising cup to his lips and brings it down on saucer with a bang; both annoyed.*)

GEORGE. To return, and not to be able to see her — to love her — to kiss her! (*Stamps.*)

POLLY. Hush!

GEORGE. I forgot! I shall wake her!

POLLY. More than that — you'll wake the baby.

GEORGE. Baby! — what baby?

POLLY. Yours.

GEORGE. Mine? — mine?

POLLY. Yes — yours and Esther's. Why didn't you know there was a baby?

GEORGE. No!

POLLY. La! the ignorance of these men!

HAWTREE (*at fireplace*). Yes, George, you're a father.

GEORGE. Why wasn't I told of this? Why didn't you write?

POLLY. How could we when you were dead?

SAM. And 'adn't left your address.

(*Looks at* HAWTREE, *who turns away quickly.*)

GEORGE. If I can't see Esther, I will see the child. The sight of me won't be too much for its nerves. Where is it?

POLLY. Sleeping in its mother's arms. (GEORGE *goes to door — she intercepts him.*) Please not! Please not!

GEORGE. I must! I will!

POLLY. It might kill her, and you wouldn't like to do that. I'll fetch the baby; but, oh, please don't make a noise. (*Going up.*) You won't make a noise — you'll be as quiet as you can, won't you? Oh! I can't believe it!

(*Exit* POLLY. SAM *dances breakdown and finishes up looking at* HAWTREE, *who turns away astonished.* SAM *disconcerted; sits on chair by table;* GEORGE *at door.*)

GEORGE. My baby — my ba — It's a dream! (*To* SAM.) You've seen it — What's it like?

SAM. Oh! it's like a — like a sort of — infant — white and — milky, and all that.

(*Enter* POLLY *with baby wrapped in shawls.* GEORGE *shuts door and meets her.*)

POLLY. Gently, gently — take care! Esther will hardly have it touched.

(SAM *rises and gets near to* GEORGE.)

GEORGE. But I'm its father.

POLLY. That don't matter. She's very particular.

GEORGE. Boy or girl?

POLLY. Guess.

GEORGE. Boy! (POLLY *nods.* GEORGE *proud.*) What's his name?

POLLY. Guess.

GEORGE. George? (POLLY *nods.*) Eustace? (POLLY *nods.*) Fairfax? Algernon? (POLLY *nods; pause.*) My names!

SAM (*to* GEORGE). You'd 'ardly think there was room enough in 'im to 'old so many names, would yer?

(HAWTREE *looks at him — turns to fire.* SAM *disconcerted again. Sits.*)

GEORGE. To come back all the way from India to find that I'm dead, and that you're alive. To find my wife a widow with a new love aged — How old are you? I'll buy you a pony to-morrow, my brave little boy! What's his weight? I should say two pound nothing. My — baby — my boy! (*Bends over him and kisses him.*) Take him away, Polly, for fear I should break him.

(Polly *takes child, and places it in cradle.*)

Hawtree (*crosses to piano. Passes* Sam, *front — stares — business.* Sam *goes round to fireplace, flings down bread and butter in a rage and drinks his tea out of saucer*). But tell us how it is you're back — how you escaped?

(*Leaning up against piano.*)

George (*coming down*). By-and-bye. Too long a story just now. Tell *me* all about it. (Polly *gives him chair.*) How is it Esther's living here?

Polly. She came back after the baby was born, and the furniture was sold up.

George. Sold up? What furniture?

Polly. That you bought for her.

Hawtree. It couldn't be helped, George — Mrs. D'Alroy was so poor.

George. Poor! But I left her £600 to put in the bank!

Hawtree. We "*must*" tell you. She gave it to her father, who banked it in his own name.

Sam. And lost it in bettin' — every copper.

George. Then she's been in want?

Polly. No — not in want. Friends lent her money.

George (*seated*). What friends? (*Pause; he looks at* Polly, *who indicates* Hawtree.) You?

Polly. Yes.

George (*rising and shaking* Hawtree's *hand*). Thank you, old fella.

(Hawtree *droops his head.*)

Sam (*aside*). Now who'd ha' thought that long swell 'ad it in 'im? 'e never mentioned it.

George. So Papa Eccles had the money? (*Sitting again.*)

Sam. And blued it.

(*Sits on corner of table.*)

Polly (*pleadingly*). You see father was very unlucky on the race-course. He told us that if it hadn't been that all his calculations were upset by a horse winning who had no business to, he should have made our fortunes. Father's been unlucky, and he gets tipsy at times, but he's a very clever man, if you only give him scope enough.

Sam. I'd give 'im scope enough!

George. Where is he now?

Sam. Public-house.

George. And how is he?

Sam. Drunk!

(Polly *pushes him off table.* Sam *sits at fireplace up stage.*)

George (*to* Hawtree). You were right. There is "*something*" in caste. (*Aloud.*) But tell us all about it. (*Sits.*)

Polly. Well, you know, you went away; and then the baby was born. Oh! he was such a sweet little thing, just like — your eyes — your hair.

(*Standing left of* George, *who is sitting.*)

George. Cut that!

Polly. Well, baby came; and when baby was six days old, your letter came, Major (*to* Hawtree). I saw that it was from India, and that it wasn't in your hand (*to* George); I guessed what was inside it, so I opened it unknown to her, and I read there of your capture and death. I daren't tell her. I went to father to ask his advice, but he was too tipsy to understand me. Sam fetched the doctor. He told us that the news would kill her. When she woke up, she said she had dreamt there was a letter from you. I told her, No; and day after day she asked for a letter. So the doctor advised us to write one as if it came from you. So we did. Sam and I and the doctor told her — told Esther, I mean — that her eyes were bad and she mustn't read, and we read our letter to her; didn't we, Sam? But, bless you! she always knew it hadn't come from you! At last, when she was stronger, we told her all.

George (*after a pause*). How did she take it?

Polly. She pressed the baby in

her arms, and turned her face to the wall. (*A pause.*) Well, to make a long story short, when she got up, she found father had lost all the money you had left her. There was a dreadful scene between them. She told him he'd robbed her and her child, and father left the house, and swore he'd never come back again.

Sam. Don't be alarmed — 'e did come back. (*Sitting by fire.*)

Polly. Oh, yes, he was too good-hearted to stop long from his children. He has his faults, but his good points, when you find 'em, are wonderful!

Sam. Yes, when you find 'em.

(*Rises, gets bread and butter from table, and sits at corner of table.*)

Polly. So she had to come back here to us, and that's all.

George. Why didn't she write to my mother?

Polly. Father wanted her; but she was too proud — she said she'd die first.

George (*rising, to* Hawtree). There's a woman! Caste's all humbug. (*Sees sword over mantel-piece.*) That's my sword (*crossing round*), and a map of India, and that's the piano I bought her — I'll swear to the silk!

Polly. Yes; that was bought in at the sale.

George (*to* Hawtree). Thank ye, old fella.

Hawtree. Not by me — I was in India at the time.

George. By whom, then?

Polly. By Sam. (Sam *winks to her to discontinue.*) I shall! He knew Esther was breaking her heart about anyone else having it, so he took the money he'd saved up for our wedding, and we're going to be married now — ain't we, Sam?

Sam (*rushing to* George *and pulling out circulars from his pocket*). And hope by constant attention to business, to merit — (Polly *pushes him away.*)

Polly. Since you died it hasn't been opened, but if I don't play it to-night, may I die an old maid!

(*Goes up.* George *crosses to* Sam, *and shakes his hand, then goes up stage, pulls up blind, and looks into street.* Sam *turns up and meets* Polly *at top of table.*)

Hawtree (*aside*). Now who'd have thought that little cad had it in him? He never mentioned it. (*Aloud.*) Apropos, George, your mother — I'll go to the Square, and tell her of —

(*Takes hat from piano.*)

George (*at cradle*). Is she in town?

Hawtree. Yes. Will you come with me?

George. And leave my wife? — and such a wife!

Hawtree. I'll go at once. I shall catch her before dinner. Good-bye, old fellow. Seeing you back again, alive and well, makes me feel quite — that I quite feel — (*Shakes* George's *hand. Goes to door, then crosses to* Sam, *who has turned* Polly's *tea into his saucer, and is just about to drink; seeing* Hawtree, *he puts it down quickly, and turns his back.*) Mr. Gerridge, I fear I have often made myself very offensive to you.

Sam. Well, sir, yer 'ave.

Hawtree (*at bottom of table*). I feared so. I didn't know you then. I beg your pardon. Let me ask you to shake hands — to forgive me, and forget it.

(*Offering his hand.*)

Sam (*taking it*). Say no more, sir; and if ever I've made myself offensive to you, I ask your pardon; forget it and forgive me. (*They shake hands warmly; as* Hawtree *crosses to door, recovering from* Sam's *hearty shake of the hand,* Sam *runs to him.*) Hi, sir! When yer marry that young lady as I know you're engaged to, if you should furnish a house, and require anything in my way —

(*Bringing out circular, begins to read it.* Polly *comes down and pushes* Sam *away, against* Hawtree. Sam *goes and sits on low chair by fireplace, down stage, disconcerted, cramming circulars into his pocket.*)

Hawtree. Good-bye, George, for the present. (*At door.*) Bye, Polly. (*Re-

sumes his Pall Mall manner as he goes out.) I'm off to the Square.

(*Exit* HAWTREE.)

GEORGE (*at cradle*). But Esther?

POLLY (*meets* GEORGE). Oh, I forgot all about Esther. I'll tell her all about it.

GEORGE. How? (*By door.*)

POLLY. I don't know; but it will come. Providence will send it to me, as it has sent you, my dear brother. (*Embracing him.*) You don't know how glad I am to see you back again! You must go. (*Pushing him.* GEORGE *takes hat off piano.*) Esther will be getting up directly. (*At door with* GEORGE, *who looks through keyhole.*) It's no use looking there; it's dark.

GEORGE (*at door*). It isn't often a man can see his own widow.

POLLY. And it isn't often that he wants to! Now, you must go. (*Pushing him off.*)

GEORGE. I shall stop outside.

SAM. And I'll whistle for you when you may come in.

POLLY. Now — hush!

GEORGE (*opening door wide*). Oh, my Esther, when you know I'm alive! I'll marry you all over again, and we'll have a second honeymoon, my darling.

(*Exit.*)

POLLY. Oh, Sam, Sam! (*Commences to sing and dance.* SAM *also dances; they meet in centre of stage, join hands, and dance around two or three times, leaving* SAM *on the left of* POLLY, *near table.* POLLY *going down.*) Oh, Sam, I'm so excited, I don't know what to do. What shall I do — what shall I do?

SAM (*taking up* HAWTREE'S *bread and butter*). 'Ave a bit of bread and butter, Polly.

POLLY. Now, Sam, light the gas; I'm going to wake her up. (*Opening door.*) Oh, my darling, if I dare tell you! (*Whispering.*) He's come back! He's come back! He's come back! Alive! Alive! Alive! Sam, kiss me!

(SAM *rushes to* POLLY, *kisses her, and she jumps off,* SAM *shutting the door.*)

SAM (*dances shutter-dance*). I'm glad the swells are gone; now I can open my safety-valve, and let my feelings escape. To think of 'is comin' back alive from India just as I am goin' to open my shop. Perhaps he'll get me the patronage of the Royal Family. It would look stunnin' over the door, a lion and a unicorn, a-standin' on their hind legs, doin' nothin' furiously, with a lozenge between 'em — thus. (*Seizes plate on table, puts his left foot on chair right of table, and imitates the picture of the Royal arms.*) Polly said I was to light up, and whatever Polly says must be done. (*Lights brackets over mantel-piece, then candles; as he lights the broken one, says.*) Why this one is for all the world like old Eccles! (*Places candles on piano and sits on music-stool.*) Poor Esther! to think of my knowin' her when she was in the ballet line — then in the 'onorable line; then a mother — no, *h*onorables is "mammas" — then a widow, and then in the ballet line again! — and 'im to come back (*growing affected*) — and find a baby, with all 'is furniture and fittin's ready for immediate use (*crossing back of table during last few lines, sits in chair left of table*) — and she, poor thing, lyin' asleep with 'er eye-lids 'ot and swollen, not knowin' that that great big, 'eavy, 'ulkin', overgrown dragoon is prowlin' outside, ready to fly at 'er lips, and strangle 'er in 'is strong, lovin' arms — it — it — it —

(*Breaks down and sobs, with his head on the table.*)

(*Enter* POLLY.)

POLLY. Why, Sam! What's the matter?

SAM (*rises and crosses*). I dunno. The water's got into my meter.

POLLY. Hush! Here's Esther.

(*Enter* ESTHER. *They stop suddenly.* POLLY *down stage.*)

SAM (*singing and dancing*). "Tiddy-ti-tum," etc.

ESTHER (*sitting near fire, taking up costume and beginning to work*). Sam, you seem in high spirits to-night!

SAM. Yes; yer see Polly and I are goin' to be married — and — and 'opes by bestowing a merit — to continue the favor —

Polly (*who has kissed* Esther *two or three times*). What are you talking about?

Sam. I don't know, — I'm off my burner.

(*Brings music-stool.* Polly *goes round to chair, facing* Esther.)

Esther. What's the matter with you to-night, dear? (*To* Polly.) I can see something in your eyes.

Sam. P'r'aps it's the new furniture!

(*Sits on music-stool.*)

Esther. Will you help me with the dress, Polly?

(*They sit,* Esther *upper end, back of table,* Polly *facing her, at lower end.*)

Polly. It was a pretty dress when it was new — not unlike the one Mdlle. Delphine used to wear. (*Suddenly clapping her hands.*) Oh!

Esther. What's the matter?

Polly. A needle! (*Crosses to* Sam, *who examines finger.*) I've got it!

Sam. What — the needle — in your finger?

Polly. No; an idea in my head!

Sam (*still looking at her finger*). Does it 'urt?

Polly. Stupid! (Sam *still sitting on stool. Aloud.*) Do you recollect Mdlle. Delphine, Esther?

Esther. Yes.

Polly. Do you recollect her in that ballet that old Herr Griffenhaagen arranged? — Jeanne la Folle, or, the Return of the Soldier?

Esther. Yes; will you do the fresh hem?

Polly. What's the use? Let me see — how did it go? How well I remember the scene! — the cottage was on that side, the bridge at the back — then ballet of villagers, and the entrance of Delphine as Jeanne, the bride — tra-lal-lala-lala-la-la (*sings and pantomimes,* Sam *imitating her*). Then the entrance of Claude, the bridegroom — (*To* Sam, *imitating swell.*) How-de-do? how-de-do?

Sam (*rising*). 'Ow are yer?

(*Imitating* Polly, *then sitting again.*)

Polly. Then there was the procession to church — the march of the soldiers over the bridge — (*sings and pantomimes*) — arrest of Claude, who is drawn for the conscription — (*business;* Esther *looks dreamily*), and is torn from the arms of his bride, at the church-porch. *Omnes* broken-hearted. *This is Omnes* broken-hearted. (*Pantomimes.*)

Esther. Polly, I don't like this; it brings back memories.

Polly (*going to table, and leaning her hands on it. Looks over at* Esther.) Oh, fuss about memories! — one can't mourn for ever. (Esther *surprised.*) Everything in this world isn't sad. There's bad news, and — and there's good news sometimes — when we least expect it.

Esther. Ah! not for me.

Polly. Why not?

Esther (*anxiously*). Polly!

Polly. Second Act! (*This to be said quickly, startling* Sam, *who has been looking on the ground during last four or five lines.*) Winter — the Village Pump. This is the village pump (*pointing to* Sam, *seated by piano, on music-stool.* Sam *turns round on music-stool, disgusted.*) Entrance of Jeanne — now called Jeanne la Folle, because she has gone mad on account of the supposed loss of her husband.

Sam. The supposed loss?

Polly. The supposed loss!

Esther (*dropping costume*). Polly!

Sam (*aside to* Polly). Mind!

Polly. Can't stop now! Entrance of Claude, *who isn't dead,* in a captain's uniform — a cloak thrown over his shoulders.

Esther. Not dead!

Polly. Don't you remember the ballet? Jeanne is mad, and can't recognize her husband; and don't, till he shows her the ribbon she gave him when they were betrothed. A bit of ribbon! Sam, have you got a bit of ribbon? Oh, that crape sword-knot, that will do!

(*Crosses down.* Sam *astonished.*)

Esther. Touch that!

(*Rising, and coming down.*)

Polly. Why not? — it's no use *now.*

Esther (*slowly, looking into* Polly's *eyes*). You have heard of George — I know you have — I see it in your eyes. You may tell me — I can bear it — I can indeed — indeed I can. Tell me — he is not dead? (*Violently agitated.*)

Polly. No!

Esther. No?

Polly. No!

Esther (*whispers*). Thank Heaven! (Sam *turns on stool, back to audience.*) You've seen him — I see you have! — I know it! — I feel it! I had a bright and happy dream — I saw him as I slept! Oh, let me know if he is near! Give me some sign — some sound — (Polly *opens piano*) — some token of his life and presence!

(Sam *touches* Polly *on the shoulder, takes hat, and exit. All to be done very quickly.* Polly *sits immediately at piano and plays air softly — the same air played by* Esther, *Act II, on the treble only.*)

Esther (*in an ecstasy*). Oh, my husband! come to me! for I know that you are near! Let me feel your arms clasp round me! — Do not fear for me! — I can bear the sight of you! — (*door opens showing* Sam *keeping* George *back*) — it will not kill me! — George — love — husband — come, oh, come to me!

(George *breaks away from* Sam, *and coming down behind* Esther *places his hands over her eyes; she gives a faint scream, and turning, falls in his arms.* Polly *plays bass as well as treble of the air, forte, then fortissimo. She then plays at random, endeavoring to hide her tears. At last strikes piano wildly, and goes off into a fit of hysterical laughter, to the alarm of* Sam, *who, rushing down as* Polly *cries* "Sam! Sam!" *falls on his knees in front of her. They embrace,* Polly *pushing him contemptuously away afterwards.* George *gets chair, sits, and* Esther *kneels at his feet — he snatches off* Esther's *cap, and throws it up stage.* Polly *goes left of* George, Sam *brings music-stool, and she sits.*)

Esther. To see you here again — to feel your warm breath upon my cheek — is it real, or am I dreaming?

Sam (*rubbing his head*). No; it's real.

Esther (*embracing* George). My darling!

Sam. My darling! (Polly *on music-stool, which* Sam *has placed for her.* Sam, *kneeling by her, imitates* Esther — Polly *scornfully pushes him away.*) But tell us — tell us how you escaped.

George. It's a long story, but I'll condense it. I was riding out, and suddenly found myself surrounded and taken prisoner. One of the troop that took me was a fella who had been my servant, and to whom I had done some little kindness. He helped me to escape, and hid me in a sort of cave, and for a long time used to bring me food. Unfortunately, he was ordered away; so he brought another Sepoy to look after me. I felt from the first this man meant to betray me, and I watched him like a lynx, during the one day he was with me. As evening drew on, a Sepoy picket was passing. I could tell by the look in the fella's eyes, he meant to call out as soon as they were near enough; so I seized him by the throat, and shook the life out of him.

Esther. You strangled him?

George. Yes.

Esther. Killed him — dead?

George. He didn't get up again.

(*Embraces* Esther.)

Polly (*to* Sam). You never go and kill Sepoys.

(*Pushes him over.*)

Sam. No! I pay rates and taxes.

George. The day after, Havelock and his Scotchmen marched through the village, and I turned out to meet them. I was too done up to join, so I was sent straight on to Calcutta. I got leave, took a berth on the P. & O. boat; the passage restored me. I landed this morning, came on here, and brought in the milk.

(*Enter the* Marquise; *she rushes to embrace* George. *All rise,* Sam *putting stool back.*)

Marquise. My dear boy! — my dear, dear boy!

Polly. Why, see, she's crying! She's glad to see him alive and back again.

Sam (*profoundly*). Well! There's always some good in women, even when they're ladies.

(*Goes up to window.* Polly *puts dress in box, and goes to cradle, then beside* Sam.)

Marquise (*crossing to* Esther). My dear daughter, we must forget our little differences. (*Kissing her.*) Won't you? How history repeats itself! You will find a similar and as unexpected a return mentioned by Froissart in the chapter that treats of Philip Dartnell —

George. Yes, mother — I remember — (*Kisses her.*)

Marquise (*to* George, *aside*). We must take her abroad, and make a lady of her.

George. Can't, mamma — she's ready-made. Nature has done it to our hands.

Marquise (*aside to* George). But I won't have the man who smells of putty — (Sam, *business at back. He is listening, and at the word "putty" throws his cap irritably on table.* Polly *pacifies him, and makes him sit down beside her on window*) — nor the man who smells of beer.

(*Goes to* Esther, *who offers her chair, and sits in chair opposite to her.* Marquise *back to audience,* Esther *facing audience.*)

(*Enter* Hawtree, *pale.*)

Hawtree. George! Oh, the Marchioness is here.

George. What's the matter?

Hawtree. Oh, nothing. Yes, there is. I don't mind telling you. I've been thrown. I called at my chambers as I came along and found this.

(*Gives* George *a note. Sits on music-stool.*)

George. From the Countess, Lady Florence's mother. (*Reads.*) "Dear Major Hawtree, — I hasten to inform you that my daughter Florence is about to enter into an alliance with Lord Saxeby, the eldest son of the Marquis of Loamshire. Under these circumstances, should you think fit to call here again, I feel assured —" Well, perhaps it's for the best. (*Returning letter.*) Caste! you know. Caste! And a marquis is a bigger swell than a major.

Hawtree. Yes, best to marry in your own rank of life.

George. If you can find *the* girl. But if ever you find *the* girl, marry her. As to her station, —

> "True hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood."

Hawtree. Ya-as. But a gentleman should hardly ally himself to a nobody.

George. My dear fella, Nobody's a mistake — he don't exist. Nobody's nobody! Everybody's somebody!

Hawtree. Yes. But still — Caste.

George. Oh, Caste's all right. Caste is a good thing if it's not carried too far. It shuts the door on the pretentious and the vulgar; but it should open the door very wide for exceptional merit. Let brains break through its barriers, and what brains can break through love may leap over.

Hawtree. Yes. Why, George, you're quite inspired — quite an orator. What makes you so brilliant? Your captivity? The voyage? What then?

George. I'm in love with my wife!

(*Enter* Eccles, *drunk, a bottle of gin in his hand.*)

Eccles (*crossing to centre of stage*). Bless this 'appy company. May we 'ave in our arms what we love in our 'earts. (*Goes to head of table.* Esther *goes to cradle, back to audience.* Polly *and* Sam, *half amused, half angry.* Marquise *still sitting in chair, back to audience.* Hawtree *facing* Eccles. George *up stage, leaning on piano in disgust.*) Polly, fetch wine-glasses — a tumbler will do for me. Let us drink a toast. Mr. Chairman (*to* Marquise), ladies, and gentlemen, — I beg to propose the 'ealth of our newly returned warrior, *my son-in-law* (Marquise *shivers*) The Right Honorable George De Alroy. Get glasses, Polly, and send for a bottle of sherry wine for my ladyship. *My* ladyship! My ladyship! M'lad'ship! (*She half turns to him.*) You and me'll have a drain together on the quiet. So delighted to see you under these altered circum — circum — circum — stangate.

(Polly, *who has shaken her head at him to desist, in vain, very distressed.*)

Sam. Shove 'is 'ead in a bucket!

(*Exit in disgust.*)

Hawtree (*aside to* George). I think I can abate this nuisance — at least, I can remove it.

(*Rises and crosses to* Eccles, *who has got round to side of table, leaning on it. He taps* Eccles *with his stick, first on right shoulder, then on left, and finally sharply on right.* Eccles *turns round and falls on point of stick —* Hawtree *steadying him.* George *crosses behind, to* Marquise, *who has gone to cradle — puts his arm round* Esther *and takes her to mantelpiece.*)

Mr. Eccles, don't you think that, with your talent for liquor, if you had an allowance of about two pounds a week, and went to Jersey, where spirits are cheap, that you could drink yourself to death in a year?

Eccles. I think I could — I'm sure I'll try.

(*Goes up left of table, steadying himself by it, and sits in chair by fire, with the bottle of gin.* Hawtree *standing by fire.* Esther *and* Polly *stand embracing. As they turn away from each other —*)

George (*coming across with* Esther). Come and play me that air that used to ring in my ears as I lay awake, night after night, captive in the cave — you know.

(*He hands* Esther *to piano. She plays the air.*)

Marquise (*bending over cradle, at end*). My grandson!

(Eccles *falls off the chair in the last stage of drunkenness, bottle in hand.* Hawtree, *leaning one foot on chair from which* Eccles *has fallen, looks at him through eye-glass.* Sam *enters, and goes to* Polly, *behind cradle, and, producing wedding-ring from several papers, holds it up before her eyes.* Esther *plays until curtain drops.*)

PYGMALION AND GALATEA

AN ORIGINAL MYTHOLOGICAL COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By W. S. GILBERT

(1871)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PYGMALION, an Athenian sculptor.
LEUCIPPE, a soldier.
CHRYSOS, an art patron.
AGESIMOS, Chrysos's slave.
MIMOS, Pygmalion's slave.
GALATEA, an animated statue.
CYNISCA, Pygmalion's wife.
DAPHNE, Chrysos's wife.
MYRINE, Pygmalion's sister.

SCENE — Pygmalion's Studio

The action is comprised within the space of twenty-four hours.

PYGMALION AND GALATEA

ACT I

Scene: Pygmalion's *studio*

Several classical statues are placed about the room; at the back a temple or cabinet containing a statue of Galatea, *before which curtains are drawn concealing the statue from the audience.*

(Mimos, *a slave, is discovered at work on a half-finished statue. To him enter* Agesimos.)

Ages. (*haughtily*). Good day. Is this Pygmalion's studio?
Mim. (*bowing*). It is.
Ages. Are you Pygmalion?
Mim. Oh, no;
I am his slave.
Ages. And has Pygmalion slaves!
A sculptor with a slave to wait on him:
A slave to fetch and carry — come and go —
And p'raps a whip to thrash him if he don't!
What's the world coming to?
Mim. What is your will?
Ages. This: Chrysos will receive Pygmalion
At half-past three to-day; so bid him come.
Mim. And are you Chrysos, sir?
Ages. (*disconcerted*). Well, no I'm not.
That is, not altogether: I'm, in fact,
His slave.
Mim. (*relieved*). His slave!
Ages. (*very proudly*). My name's Agesimos!
Mim. And has Agesimos a master then,
To bid him fetch and carry — come and go —
And wield a whip to thrash him if he don't?
What's the world coming to?
Ages. Poor purblind fool!
I'd sooner tie the sandals of my lord,
Than own five hundred thousand such as you.
Whip! why Agesimos would rather far
Be whipped by Chrysos seven times a day,
Than whip you hence to the Acropolis;
What say you now?
Mim. Why, that upon one point
Agesimos and I are quite agreed.
And who is Chrysos?
Ages. Hear the slave, ye gods!
He knows not Chrysos!
Mim. Verily, not I.
Ages. He is the chiefest man in Athens, sir;
The father of the arts — a nobleman
Of princely liberality and taste,
On whom five hundred starved Pygmalions
May batten if they will.

(*Enter* Pygmalion.)

Pyg. Who is this man?
Ages. I'm Chrysos's slave — my name's Agesimos.
Chrysos has heard of you: he understands
That you have talent, and he condescends
To bid you call on him. But take good care
How you offend him: he can make or mar.
Pyg. Your master's slave reflects his insolence!
Tell him from me that, though I'm poor enough,
I am an artist and a gentleman.
He should not reckon Art among his slaves:
She rules the world — so let him wait on her.
Ages. This is a sculptor!
Pyg. (*furiously*). And an angry one!
Begone, and take my message to your lord.
(*Exit* Agesimos.)
Insolent hound!

(*Enter* Cynisca.)

Cyn. Pygmalion, what's amiss?
Pyg. Chrysos has sent his slave to render me

The customary tribute paid by wealth
To mere intelligence.
Cyn. Pygmalion!
Brooding upon the chartered insolence
Of a mere slave! Dismiss the thought at once.
Come, take thy chisel; thou hast work to do
Ere thy wife-model takes her leave to-day;
In half-an-hour I must be on the road
To Athens. Half-an-hour remains to thee —
Come — make the most of it — I'll pose myself;
Say — will that do?
Pyg. I cannot work to-day.
My hand's uncertain — I must rest awhile.
Cyn. Then rest and gaze upon thy masterpiece,
'Twill reconcile thee to thyself — Behold!
(*Draws curtain and discovers statue of* Galatea.)
Pyg. Yes — for in gazing on my handiwork,
I gaze on heaven's handiwork — thyself!
Cyn. And yet, although it be thy masterpiece,
It has the fault thy patrons find with all
Thy many statues.
Pyg. What then do they say?
Cyn. They say Pygmalion's statues have one head —
That head, Cynisca's.
Pyg. So then it's a fault
To reproduce an hundred thousand fold,
For the advantage of mankind at large,
The happiness the gods have given me!
Well, when I find a fairer head than thine
I'll give my patrons some variety.
Cyn. I would not have thee find another head
That seemed as fair to thee for all the world!
We'll have no stranger models if you please,
I'll be your model, sir, as heretofore,
So reproduce me at your will; and yet
It were sheer vanity in me to think
That this fair stone recalls Cynisca's face!
Pyg. Cynisca's face in every line!
Cyn. No, no!
Those outlines softened, angles smoothed away,
The eyebrows arched, the head more truly poised,
The forehead ten years smoother than mine own,
Tell rather of Cynisca as she was
When, in the silent groves of Artemis,
Pygmalion told his love ten years ago:
And then the placid brow, the sweet sad lips,
The gentle head down-bent resignedly,
Proclaim that this is not Pygmalion's wife,
Who laughs and frowns, but knows no meed between.
I am no longer as that statue is!
(*Closes curtains.*)
Pyg. Why here's ingratitude, to slander Time,
Who in his hurried course has passed thee by!
Or is it that Cynisca won't allow
That Time *could* pass her by, and never pause
To print a kiss upon so fair a face?

(*Enter* Myrine.)

Myr. Pygmalion; I have news.
Pyg. My sister, speak.
Myr. (*bashfully*). Send Mimos hence.
Pyg. (*signs to* Mimos). Now we are quite alone.
Myr. Leucippe —
Cyn. Well!
Myr. (*to* Pyg.). He was thy schoolfellow,
And thou and he are brothers save in blood;
He loves my brother as a brother.
Pyg. Yes,
I'm sure of that; but is that all thy news?
There's more to come!
Myr. (*bashfully*). He loves thy sister too.
Pyg. Why, this is news, Myrine — kiss me girl.
I'm more than happy at thy happiness,
There is no better fellow in the world!
Cyn. But tell us all about it, dear. How came
The awkward, bashful, burly warrior,
To nerve himself to this confession?

(Leucippe *appears at door.*)

Myr. Why —

He's here — and he shall tell thee how it was.
Leuc. In truth I hardly know, I'm new at it;
I'm but a soldier. Could I fight my way
Into a maiden's heart, why well and good;
I'd get there, somehow. But to talk and sigh,
And whisper pretty things — I can't do that!
I tried it, but I stammered, blushed, and failed.
Myrine laughed at me — but, bless her heart,
She knew my meaning, and she pulled me through!
Myr. I don't know how, Pygmalion, but I did.
He stammered, as he tells you, and I laughed;
And then I felt so sorry, when I saw
The great, big, brave Leucippe look so like
A beaten schoolboy — that I think I cried.
And then — I quite forgot what happened next,
Till, by some means, we, who had always been
So cold and formal, distant and polite,
Found ourselves ——
Leuc. Each upon the other's neck!
You are not angry? (*Offering his hand.*)
Pyg. (*taking it*). Angry? overjoyed!
I wish I had been there, unseen, to see;
No sight could give me greater happiness!
Leuc. What! say you so? Why then, Myrine, girl,
We'll reproduce it for his benefit.
(*They embrace.*)
See here, Pygmalion, here's a group for thee!
Come, fetch thy clay, and set to work on it,
I'll promise thee thy models will not tire!
Cyn. How now, Leucippe, where's the schoolboy blush
That used to coat thy face at sight of her?
Leuc. The coating was but thin, we've rubbed it off!
(*Kisses* Myrine.)
Pyg. Take care of him, Myrine; thou hast not
The safeguard that protects *her*.
(*Indicating* Cynisca.)
Myr. What is that?
Cyn. It's a strange story. Many years ago
I was a holy nymph of Artemis,
Pledged to eternal maidenhood!
Leuc. Indeed!
Myr. How terrible!
Cyn. It seems not so to me;
For weeks and weeks I pondered steadfastly
Upon the nature of that serious step
Before I took it — lay awake at night,
Looking upon it from this point and that,
And I at length determined that the vow,
Which to Myrine seems so terrible,
Was one that I, at all events, could keep.
Myr. How old wast thou, Cynisca?
Cyn. I was ten!
Well — in due course, I reached eleven, still
I saw no reason to regret the step;
Twelve — thirteen — fourteen saw me still unchanged;
At fifteen, it occurred to me one day
That marriage was a necessary ill,
Inflicted by the gods to punish us,
And to evade it were impiety;
At sixteen the idea became more fixed;
At seventeen I was convinced of it!
Pyg. In the meantime she'd seen Pygmalion.
Myr. And you confided all your doubts to him?
Cyn. I did, and he endorsed them — so we laid
The case before my mistress Artemis;
No need to tell the arguments we used,
Suffice it that they brought about our end.
And Artemis, her icy steadfastness
Thawed by the ardor of Cynisca's prayers,
Replied, "Go girl, and wed Pygmalion;
But mark my words, whichever one of you,
Or he or she, shall falsify the vow
Of perfect conjugal fidelity —
The wronged one, he or she, shall have the power
To call down *blindness* on the backslider,
And sightless shall the truant mate remain
Until expressly pardoned by the other."

LEUC. It's fortunate such powers as thine are not
In universal use; for if they were,
One-half the husbands and one-half the wives
Would be as blind as night; the other half,
Having their eyes, would use them — on each other!

(MIMOS *enters, and gives* PYGMALION *a scroll, which he reads.*)

MYR. But then, the power of calling down this doom
Remains with thee. Thou wouldst not burden him
With such a curse as utter sightlessness,
However grieviously he might offend?
CYN. I love Pygmalion for his faithfulness;
The act that robs him of that quality
Will rob him of the love that springs from it.
MYR. But sightlessness — it is so terrible!
CYN. And faithfulness — it is so terrible!
I take my temper from Pygmalion;
While he is god-like — he's a god to me,
And should he turn to devil, I'll turn with him;
I know no half moods, I am love or hate!
MYR. (*to* LEUC.). What do you say to that?
LEUC. Why, on the whole
I'm glad *you're* not a nymph of Artemis!
(*Exeunt*, MYRINE *and* LEUCIPPE.)
PYG. I've brought him to his senses. Presently
My patron Chrysos will be here to earn
Some thousand drachmas.
CYN. How, my love, to earn?
He is a man of unexampled wealth,
And follows no profession.
PYG. Yes, he does;
He is a patron of the Arts, and makes
A handsome income by his patronage.
CYN. How so?
PYG. He is an ignorant buffoon,
But purses hold a higher rank than brains,
And he is rich; wherever Chrysos buys,
The world of smaller fools comes following,
And men are glad to sell their work to him
At half its proper price, that they may say,
"Chrysos has purchased handiwork of ours."
He is a fashion, and he knows it well
In buying sculpture; he appraises it
As he'd appraise a master-mason's work —
So much for marble, and so much for time,
So much for working tools — but still he buys,
And so he is a patron of the Arts!
CYN. To think that heaven-born Art should be the slave
Of such as he!
PYG. Well, wealth is heaven-born too.
I work for wealth.
CYN. Thou workest, love, for fame.
PYG. And fame brings wealth. The thought's contemptible,
But I can do no more than work for wealth.
CYN. Such words from one whose noble work it is
To call the senseless marble into life!
PYG. Life! Dost thou call that life?
(*Indicating statue of* GALATEA.)
CYN. It all but breathes!
PYG. (*bitterly*). It all but breathes — therefore it talks aloud!
It all but moves — therefore it walks and runs!
It all but lives, and therefore it is life!
No, no, my love, the thing is cold, dull stone,
Shaped to a certain form, but still dull stone,
The lifeless, senseless mockery of life.
The gods make life: I can make only death!
Why, my Cynisca, though I stand so well,
The merest cut-throat, when he plies his trade,
Makes better death than I, with all my skill!
CYN. Hush, my Pygmalion! the gods are good,
And they have made thee nearer unto them
Than other men; this is ingratitude!
PYG. Not so; has not a monarch's second son
More cause for anger that he lacks a throne
Than he whose lot is cast in slavery?

Cyn. Not much more cause, perhaps, but more excuse.
Now I must go.
Pyg. So soon, and for so long!
Cyn. One day, 'twill quickly pass away!
Pyg. With those who measure time by almanacks, no doubt,
But not with him who knows no days save those
Born of the sunlight of Cynisca's eyes;
It will be night with me till she returns.
Cyn. Then sleep it through, Pygmalion! But stay,
Thou shalt *not* pass the weary hours alone;
Now mark thou this — while I'm away from thee,
There stands my only representative.
(*Indicating* Galatea.)
She is my proxy, and I charge you, sir,
Be faithful unto her as unto me;
Into her quietly attentive ear
Pour all thy treasures of hyperbole,
And give thy nimble tongue full license, lest
Disuse should rust its glib machinery;
If thoughts of love should haply crowd on thee,
There stands my other self, tell them to her;
She'll listen well.
(*He makes a movement of impatience.*)
Nay, that's ungenerous,
For she is I, yet lovelier than I,
And hath no temper, sir, and hath no tongue!
Thou hast thy license, make good use of it.
Already I'm half jealous —
(*Draws curtains.*)
There, it's gone.
The thing is but a statue after all,
And I am safe in leaving thee with her;
Farewell, Pygmalion, till I return.
(*Kisses him, and exit.*)
Pyg. "The thing is but a statue after all!"
Cynisca little thought that in those words
She touched the key-note of my discontent —
True, I have powers denied other men;
Give me a block of senseless marble — Well,
I'm a magician, and it rests with me
To say what kernel lies within its shell;
It shall contain a man, a woman — a child —
A dozen men and women if I will.
So far the gods and I run neck and neck;
Nay, so far I can beat them at their trade!
I am no bungler — all the men *I* make
Are straight-limbed fellows, each magnificent
In the perfection of his manly grace:
I make no crook-backs — all my men are gods,
My women goddesses — in outward form.
But there's my tether! I can go so far,
And go no farther! At that point I stop,
To curse the bonds that hold me sternly back:
To curse the arrogance of those proud gods,
Who say, "Thou shalt be greatest among men,
"And yet infinitesimally small!"
Galatea. Pygmalion!
Pyg. Who called?
Gal. Pygmalion!
(Pyg. *tears away curtain and discovers* Galatea *alive.*)
Pyg. Ye gods! It lives!
Gal. Pygmalion!
Pyg. It speaks!
I have my prayer! my Galatea breathes!
Gal. Where am I? Let me speak, Pygmalion;
Give me thy hand — both hands — how soft and warm!
Whence came I? (*Descends.*)
Pyg. Why, from yonder pedestal!
Gal. That pedestal? Ah, yes, I recollect,
There was a time when it was part of me.
Pyg. That time has passed forever, thou art now
A living, breathing woman, excellent
In every attribute of womankind.
Gal. Where am I, then?
Pyg. Why, born into the world
By miracle!
Gal. Is this the world?
Pyg. It is.
Gal. This room?
Pyg. This room is portion of a house;

The house stands in a grove; the grove itself
Is one of many, many thousand groves
In Athens.
Gal. And is Athens then the world?
Pyg. To an Athenian — Yes —
Gal. And I am one?
Pyg. By birth and parentage, not by descent.
Gal. But how came I to be?
Pyg. Well — let me see.
Oh — you were quarried in Pentelicus;
I modelled you in clay — my artisans
Then roughed you out in marble — I, in turn,
Brought my artistic skill to bear on you,
And made you what you are — in all but life —
The gods completed what I had begun,
And gave the only gift I could not give!
Gal. Then is this life?
Pyg. It is.
Gal. And not long since
I was a cold, dull stone! I recollect
That by some means I knew that I was stone:
That was the first dull gleam of consciousness;
I became conscious of a chilly self,
A cold immovable identity,
I knew that I was stone, and knew no more!
Then, by an imperceptible advance,
Came the dim evidence of outer things,
Seen — darkly and imperfectly — yet seen —
The walls surrounded me, and I, alone.
That pedestal — that curtain — then a voice
That called on Galatea! At that word,
Which seemed to shake my marble to the core,
That which was dim before, came evident.
Sounds, that had hummed around me, indistinct,
Vague, meaningless — seemed to resolve themselves
Into a language I could understand;
I felt my frame pervaded with a glow
That seemed to thaw my marble into flesh;
Its cold hard substance throbbed with active life,
My limbs grew supple, and I moved — I lived!
Lived in the ecstasy of new-born life!
Lived in the love of him that fashioned me!
Lived in a thousand tangled thoughts of hope,
Love, gratitude — thoughts that resolved themselves
Into one word, that word, Pygmalion!
(*Kneels to him.*)
Pyg. I have no words to tell thee of my joy,
O woman — perfect in thy loveliness!
Gal. What is that word? Am I a woman?
Pyg. Yes.
Gal. Art thou a woman?
Pyg. No, I am a man.
Gal. What *is* a man?
Pyg. A being strongly framed,
To wait on woman, and protect her from
All ills that strength and courage can avert;
To work and toil for her, that she may rest;
To weep and mourn for her, that she may laugh;
To fight and die for her, that she might live!
Gal. (*after a pause*). I'm glad I am a woman.
(*Takes his hand — he leads her down* L.)
Pyg. So am I. (*They sit.*)
Gal. That I escape the pains thou hast to bear?
Pyg. That I may undergo those pains for thee.
Gal. With whom then would'st thou fight?
Pyg. With any man
Whose word or deed gave Galatea pain.
Gal. Then there are other men in this strange world?
Pyg. There are, indeed!
Gal. And other women?
Pyg. (*taken aback*). Yes;
Though for the moment I'd forgotten it!
Yes, other women.
Gal. And for all of these
Men work, and toil, and mourn, and weep, and fight?
Pyg. It is man's duty, if he's called upon,

To fight for all — he works for those he loves.
Gal. Then by thy work I know thou lovest me.
Pyg. Indeed, I love thee! (*Embraces her.*)
Gal. With what kind of love?
Pyg. I love thee (*recollecting himself and releasing her*) as a sculptor does his work!
(*Aside.*) There is a diplomacy in that reply.
Gal. My love is different in kind to thine:
I am no sculptor, and I've done no work,
Yet I do love thee: say — what love is mine?
Pyg. Tell me its symptoms — then I'll answer thee.
Gal. Its symptoms? Let me call them as they come.
A sense that I am made *by* thee *for* thee;
That I have no will that is not wholly thine;
That I've no thought, no hope, no enterprise
That does not own *thee* as its sovereign;
That I have life, that I may live for thee,
That I am thine — that thou and I are one!
What kind of love is that?
Pyg. A kind of love
That I shall run some risk in dealing with!
Gal. And why, Pygmalion?
Pyg. Such love as thine
A man may not receive, except indeed
From one who is, or is to be, his wife.
Gal. Then *I* will be thy wife!
Pyg. That may not be;
I have a wife — the gods allow but one.
Gal. Why did the gods then send me here to thee?
Pyg. I cannot say — unless to punish me
For unreflecting and presumptuous prayer!
I prayed that thou shouldst live — I have my prayer,
And now I see the fearful consequence
That must attend it!
Gal. Yet thou lovest me?
Pyg. Who could look on that face and stifle love?
Gal. Then I am beautiful?
Pyg. Indeed thou art.
Gal. I wish that I could look upon myself,
But that's impossible.
Pyg. Not so indeed.
This mirror will reflect thy face. Behold!
(*Hands her a mirror.*)
Gal. How beautiful! I'm very glad to know
That both our tastes agree so perfectly;
Why, my Pygmalion, I did not think
That aught could be more beautiful than thou,
Till I beheld myself. Believe me, love,
I could look in this mirror all day long.
So I'm a woman!
Pyg. There's no doubt of that!
Gal. Oh happy maid to be so passing fair!
And happier still Pygmalion, who can gaze,
At will, upon so beautiful a face!
Pyg. Hush! Galatea — in thine innocence
Thou sayest things that others would reprove.
Gal. Indeed, Pygmalion; then it is wrong
To think that one is exquisitely fair?
Pyg. Well, Galatea, it's a sentiment
That every woman shares with thee;
They *think* it — but they keep it to themselves.
Gal. And is thy wife as beautiful as I?
Pyg. No, Galatea, for in forming thee
I took her features — lovely in themselves —
And in the marble made them lovelier still.
Gal. (*disappointed*). Oh! then I'm not original?
Pyg. Well — no —
That is — thou hast indeed a prototype,
But though in stone thou didst resemble her,
In life the difference is manifest.
Gal. I'm very glad that I'm lovelier than she.
And am I better?
Pyg. That I do not know.
Gal. Then she has faults?
Pyg. But very few indeed;

Mere trivial blemishes, that serve to show
That she and I are of one common kin.
I love her all the better for such faults!
Gal. (*after a pause*). Tell me some faults and I'll commit them now.
Pyg. There is no hurry; they will come in time:
Though for that matter, it's a grevious sin
To sit as lovingly as we sit now.
Gal. Is sin so pleasant? If to sit and talk
As we are sitting, be indeed a sin,
Why, I could sin all day! But tell me, love,
Is this great fault that I'm committing now
The kind of fault that only serves to show
That thou and I are of one common kin?
Pyg. Indeed, I'm very much afraid it is.
Gal. And dost thou love me better for such fault?
Pyg. Where is the mortal that could answer "no?"
Gal. Why then I'm satisfied, Pygmalion;
Thy wife and I can start on equal terms.
She loves thee?
Pyg. Very much.
Gal. I'm glad of that.
I like thy wife.
Pyg. And why?
Gal. Our tastes agree.
We love Pygmalion well, and what is more,
Pygmalion loves us both. I like thy wife;
I'm sure we shall agree.
Pyg. (*aside*). I doubt it much!
Gal. Is she within?
Pyg. No, she is not within.
Gal. But she'll come back?
Pyg. Oh, yes, she will come back.
Gal. How pleased she'll be to know, when she returns,
That there was some one here to fill her place!
Pyg. (*drily*). Yes, I should say she'd be extremely pleased.
Gal. Why, there is something in thy voice which says
That thou art jesting! Is it possible
To say one thing and mean another?
Pyg. Yes,
It's sometimes done.
Gal. How very wonderful;
So clever!
Pyg. And so very useful.
Gal. Yes.
Teach me the art.
Pyg. The art will come in time.
My wife will *not* be pleased; there — that's the truth.
Gal. I do not think that I *shall* like thy wife.
Tell me more of her.
Pyg. Well —
Gal. What did she say
When last she left thee?
Pyg. Humph! Well, let me see:
Oh! true, she gave thee to me as my wife, —
Her solitary representative;
She feared I should be lonely till she came,
And counselled me, if thoughts of love should come,
To speak those thoughts to thee, as I am wont
To speak to her.
Gal. That's right.
Pyg. But when she spoke
Thou wast a stone, now thou art flesh and blood,
Which makes a difference!
Gal. It's a strange world!
A woman loves her husband very much,
And cannot brook that I should love him too;
She fears he will be lonely till she comes,
And will not let me cheer his loneliness;
She bids him breathe his love to senseless stone,
And when that stone is brought to life — be dumb!
It's a strange world — I cannot fathom it!
Pyg. (*aside*). Let me be brave, and put an end to this.
(*Aloud.*) Come Galatea — till my wife returns,
My sister shall provide thee with a home;

Her house is close at hand.
Gal. (*astonished and alarmed*). Send me not hence,
Pygmalion — let me stay.
Pyg. It may not be.
Come, Galatea, we shall meet again.
Gal. (*resignedly*). Do with me as thou wilt, Pygmalion!
But we *shall* meet again? — and very soon?
Pyg. Yes, very soon.
Gal. And when thy wife returns,
She'll let me stay with thee?
Pyg. I do not know.
(*Aside.*) Why should I hide the truth from her? (*Aloud.*) Alas!
I may not see thee then.
Gal. Pygmalion!
What fearful words are these?
Pyg. The bitter truth.
I may not love thee — I must send thee hence.
Gal. Recall those words, Pygmalion, my love!
Was it for this that heaven gave me life?
Pygmalion, have mercy on me; see,
I am thy work, thou hast created me;
The gods have sent me to thee. I am thine,
Thine! only, and unalterably thine!
This is the thought with which my soul is charged.
Thou tellest me of one who claims thy love,
That thou hast love for her alone: Alas!
I do not know these things — I only know
That Heaven has sent me here to be with thee!
Thou tellest me of duty to thy wife,
Of vows that thou will love but her; Alas!
I do not know these things — I only know
That Heaven, who sent me here, has given me
One all-absorbing duty to discharge —
To love thee, and to make thee love again!

(*During this speech* Pygmalion *has shown symptoms of irresolution; at its conclusion he takes her in his arms, and embraces her passionately.*)

ACT II

Scene: *Same as Act I*

(Pygmalion *discovered at work on an unfinished statue.*)

Pyg. To-morrow my Cynisca comes to me;
Would that she had never departed hence!
It took a miracle to make me false,
And even then I was but false in thought;
A less exacting wife might be appeased
By that reflection. But Pygmalion
Must be immaculate in every thought,
Even though Heaven's armaments be ranged
Against the fortress of his constancy.

(*Enter* Myrine, *in great excitement.*)

Myr. Pygmalion!
Pyg. Myrine!
Myr. Touch me not,
Thou hast deceived me, and deceived thy wife!
Who is the woman thou didst send to me
To share my roof last night?
Pyg. Be pacified;
Judge neither of us hastily; in truth
She is as pure, as innocent as thou.
Myr. Oh, miserable man — confess the truth!
Disguise not that of which she boasts aloud!
Pyg. Of what then does she boast?
Myr. To all I say
She answers with one parrot-like reply,
"I love Pygmalion" — and when incensed
I tell her that thou hast a cheated wife,
She only says "I love Pygmalion,
"I and my life are his, and his alone!"
Who is this shameless woman, sir? Confess!
Pyg. Myrine, I will tell thee all. The gods,
To punish my expressed impiety,
Have worked a miracle, and brought to life
My statue Galatea!
Myr. (*incredulously*). Marvellous,
If it be true!
Pyg. It's absolutely true.

(Myrine *opens the curtains and sees the pedestal empty.*)

Myr. The statue's gone!
(Galatea *appears at door.*)
Pyg. The statue's at the door!
Gal. At last we meet! Oh! my Pygmalion!
What strange, strange things have happened since we met.
Pyg. Why, what has happened to thee?
Gal. Fearful things!
(*To* Myr.) I went with thee into thine house —
Myr. Well, well.
Gal. And then I sat alone and wept — and wept
A long, long time for my Pygmalion.
Then by degrees, by tedious degrees,
The light — the glorious light! — the god-sent light!
I saw it sink — sink — sink — behind the world!
Then I grew cold — cold — as I used to be,
Before my loved Pygmalion gave me life.
Then came the fearful thought that, by degrees,
I was returning into stone again!
How bitterly I wept and prayed aloud
That it might not be so! "Spare me, ye gods!
"Spare me," I cried, "for my Pygmalion.
A little longer for Pygmalion!
Oh, take me not so early from my love;
Oh, let me see him once — but once again!"
But no — they heard me not, for they are good,
And had they heard, must needs have pitied me;
They had not seen *thee*, and they did not know
The happiness that I must leave behind.
I fell upon thy couch (*to* Myrine); my eyelids closed;
My senses faded from me one by one;
I knew no more until I found myself,
After a strange dark interval of time,
Once more upon my hated pedestal,
A statue — motionless — insensible;
And then I saw the glorious gods come down!
Down to this room! the air was filled with them!
They came and looked upon Pygmalion,
And looking on him, kissed him one by one,
And said, in tones that spoke to me of life,
"We cannot take her from such happiness!
"Live, Galatea, for his love!" And then
The glorious light that I had lost came back —
There was Myrine's room, there was her couch,
There was the sun in heaven; and the birds
Sang once more in the great green waving trees,
As I had heard them sing — I lived once more
To look on him I love!
Myr. 'Twas but a dream!
Once every day this death occurs to us,
Till thou and I and all who dwell on earth
Shall sleep to wake no more!
Gal. To wake no more?
Pyg. That time must come — may be not yet awhile —
Still it must come, and we shall all return
To the cold earth from which we quarried thee.
Gal. See how the promises of new-born life
Fade from the bright hope-picture, one by one!
Love for Pygmalion, a blighting sin;
His love a shame that he must hide away;
Sleep, stone-like senseless sleep, our natural state;
And life a passing vision born thereof!
How the bright promises fade one by one!
Myr. Why there are many men who thou mayest love;
But not Pygmalion — he has a wife.
Gal. Does no one love him?
Myr. Certainly — *I* do.
He is my brother.
Gal. Did he give thee life?
Myr. Why, no; but then —
Gal. He did not give thee life,
And yet thou lovest him! And why not I
Who owe my very being to his love?
Pyg. Well, thou may'st love me — as a father.
Myr. Yes;

He *is* thy father, for he gave thee life.
Gal. Well, as thou wilt; it is enough to know
That I may love thee. Wilt thou love me too?
Pyg. Yes, as a daughter; there, that's understood.
Gal. Then I am satisfied.
Myr. (*aside*). Indeed I hope
Cynisca also will be satisfied!
(*Exit* Myrine.)
Gal. (*To* Pyg.) Thou art not going from me?
Pyg. For a while.
Gal. Oh, take me with thee; leave me not alone
With these cold emblems of my former self! (*Alluding to statues.*)
I dare not look on them!
Pyg. Leucippe comes,
And he shall comfort thee till I return;
I'll not be long!
Gal. Leucippe! Who's he?
Pyg. A valiant soldier.
Gal. What is that?
Pyg. A man,
Who's hired to kill his country's enemies.
Gal. (*horrified*). A paid assassin!
Pyg. (*annoyed*). Well that's rather strong.
There spoke the thoroughly untutored mind;
So coarse a sentiment might fairly pass
With mere Arcadians — a cultured state
Holds soldiers at a higher estimate.
In Athens — which is highly civilized —
The soldier's social rank is in itself
Almost a patent of nobility.
Gal. He kills! And he is paid to kill!
Pyg. No doubt.
But then he kills to save his countrymen.
Gal. Whether his countrymen be right or wrong?
Pyg. He don't go into that — it's quite enough
That there are enemies for him to kill:
He goes and kills them when his orders come.
Gal. How terrible! Why, my Pygmalion,
How many dreadful things thou teachest me!
Thou tellest me of death — that hideous doom
That all must fill; and having told me this —
Here is a man, whose business is to kill:
To filch from other men the priceless boon
That thou hast given me — the boon of life —
And thou defendest him!
Pyg. I have no time
To make these matters clear — but here he comes,
Talk to him — thou wilt find him kind and good,
Despite his terrible profession.
Gal. (*in great terror*). No!
I'll not be left with him, Pygmalion. Stay!
He is a murderer!
Pyg. Ridiculous!
Why, Galatea, he will harm thee not:
He is as good as brave. I'll not be long,
I'll soon return. Farewell!
(*Exit.*)
Gal. I will obey,
Since thou desirest it; but to be left
Alone with one whose mission is to kill!
Oh, it is terrible!

(*Enter* Leucippe *with a Fawn that he has shot.*)

Leuc. A splendid shot,
And one that I shall never make again!
Gal. Monster! Approach me not!
(*Shrinking into corner.*)
Leuc. Why, who is this?
Nay, I'll not hurt thee, maiden!
Gal. Spare me, sir!
I have not done thy country any wrong!
I am no enemy!
Leuc. I'll swear to that!
Were Athens' enemies as fair as thou,
She'd never be at loss for warriors.
Gal. Oh miserable man, repent! repent!
Ere the stern marble claim you once again.
Leuc. I don't quite understand —
Gal. Remember, sir,
The sculptor who designed you, little thought

That when he prayed the gods to give you life,
He turned a monster loose upon the world!
See, there is blood upon those cruel hands!
Oh touch me not!
Leuc. (*aside*). Poor crazy little girl!
Why — there's no cause for fear — I'll harm thee not —
As for the blood, this will account for it.
(*Showing Fawn.*)
Gal. What's that?
Leuc. A little fawn.
Gal. It does not move!
Leuc. No, for I wounded her.
Gal. Oh, horrible!
Leuc. Poor little thing! 'Twas almost accident;
I lay upon my back beneath a tree,
Whistling the lazy hours away — when lo!
I saw her bounding through a distant glade;
My bow was handy; in sheer wantonness
I aimed an arrow at her, and let fly,
Believing that at near a hundred yards
So small a being would be safe enough,
But, strange to tell, I hit her. Here she is;
She moves — poor little lady! Ah, she's dead!
Gal. Oh, horrible! oh, miserable man!
What have you done?
(*Takes Fawn into her arms*) —
Why, you have murdered her!
Poor little thing! I know not what thou art;
Thy form is strange to me; but thou hadst life
And he has robbed thee of it!
(*Gives it back to* Leuc.)
Get you hence!
Ere vengeance overtake you!
Leuc. Well, in truth,
I have some apprehension on that score.
It was Myrine's — though I knew it not!
'Twould pain her much to know that it is dead;
So keep the matter carefully from her
Until I can replace it.
(*Exit* Leucippe *with Fawn.*)
Gal. Get you hence;
I have no compact with a murderer!

(*Enter* Myrine.)

Myr. Why, Galatea, what has frightened thee?
Gal. Myrine, I have that to say to thee
That thou must nerve thyself to hear. That man —
That man thou lovest — is a murderer!
Myr. Poor little maid! Pygmalion, ere he left,
Told me that by that name thou didst describe
The bravest soldier that our country owns!
He's no assassin, he's a warrior.
Gal. Then what is an assassin?
Myr. One who wars
Only with weak, defenceless creatures. One
Whose calling is to murder unawares.
My brave Leucippe is no murderer.
Gal. Thy brave Leucippe is no longer brave,
He is a mere assassin by thy showing.
I saw him with his victim in his arms,
His wicked hands dyed crimson with her blood!
There she lay, cold and stark — her gentle eyes
Glazed with the film of death. She moved but once,
She turned her head to him and tried to speak,
But ere she could articulate a word
Her head fell helplessly, and she was dead!
Myr. Why, you are raving, girl! Who told you this?
Gal. He owned it; and he gloried in the deed.
He told me how, in arrant wantonness,
He drew his bow, and smote her to the heart!
Myr. Leucippe did all this! Impossible!
You must be dreaming!
Gal. On my life, it's true.
See, here's a handkerchief which still stained
With her life-blood — I staunched it with my hand.
Myr. Who was his victim?
Gal. Nay — I cannot tell.

Her form was strange to me — but here he comes;
Oh, hide me from that wicked murderer!

(*Enter* Leucippe.)

Myr. Leucippe, can this dreadful tale be true?
Leuc. (*to* Gal., *aside*). Thou should have kept my secret. See, poor girl,
How it distresses her. (*To* Myr.) It's true enough,
But Galatea should have kept it close,
I knew that it would pain thee grievously.
Myr. Some devil must have turned Leucippe's brain!
You did all this?
Leuc. Undoubtedly I did.
I saw my victim dancing happily
Across my field of view — I took my bow,
And, at the distance of a hundred yards,
I sent an arrow right into her heart.
There are few soldiers who could do as much.
Myr. Indeed I hope that there are very few.
Oh, miserable man!
Leuc. That's rather hard.
Congratulate me rather on my aim,
Of which I have some reason now to boast;
As for my victim — why, one more or less,
What does it matter? There are plenty left!
And then reflect — indeed, I never thought
That I should hit her at so long a range;
My aim was truer than I thought it was,
And the poor little lady's dead!
Myr. Alas!
This is the calmness of insanity.
What shall we do? Go, hide yourself away —
Leuc. But ——
Myr. Not a word — I will not hear thy voice,
I will not look upon thy face again;
Begone!
Gal. Go, sir, or I'll alarm the house!
Leuc. Well, this is sensibility, indeed!
Well, they are women — women judge these things
By some disjointed logic of their own,
That is not given man to understand.
I'm off to Athens — when your reason comes
Send for me, if you will. Till then, farewell.

(*Exit, angrily.*)

Myr. Oh, this must be a dream, and I shall wake
To happiness once more!
Gal. A dream! no doubt!
We both are dreaming, and we dream the same!
But by what sign, Myrine, can we tell
Whether we dream or wake?
Myr. There are some things
Too terrible for truth, and this is one.

(*Enter* Pygmalion, *with Fawn.*)

Pyg. Why, what's the matter with Leucippe, girl?
I saw him leave the house, and mount his horse
With every show of anger.
Myr. He is mad,
And hath done a deed I dare not name.
Did he say ought to thee before he left?
Pyg. Yes; when I asked him what had angered him,
He threw me this (*showing Fawn*).
Gal. (*in extreme of horror*). His victim! Take it hence!
I cannot look at it!
Myr. Why what is this?
Gal. The being he destroyed in very wantonness;
He robbed it of the life the gods had given.
Oh! take it hence, I dare not look on death!
Myr. Why, was this *all* he killed?
Gal. (*astonished*). All!!! And enough!
Myr. Why, girl — thou must be mad! Pygmalion —
She told me he had murdered somebody,
But knew not whom!
Pyg. (*in great agitation*). The girl will drive us mad!
Bid them prepare my horse — I'll bring him back.

(*Exit* Myrine.)

Gal. Have I done wrong? Indeed, I did not know:
Thou art not angry with me?

Pyg. Yes, I am;
I'm more than angry with thee — not content
With publishing thine unmasked love for me,
Thou hast estranged Leucippe from *his* love
Through thine unwarrantable foolishness.

(*Enter* Mimos.)

Mim. Sir, Chrysos and his lady are without.
Pyg. I cannot see them now. Stay — show them in. (*Exit* Mimos.)
(*To* Gal.) Go, wait in there. I'll join thee very soon. (*Exit* Galatea.)

(*Enter* Daphne.)

Daph. Where is Pygmalion?
Pyg. Pygmalion's here.
Daph. We called upon you many months ago,
But you were not at home — so being here,
We looked around us and we saw the stone
You keep so carefully behind that veil.
Pyg. That was a most outrageous liberty.
Daph. Sir! Do you know me?
Pyg. You are Chrysos's wife.
Has Chrysos come with you?
Daph. He waits without.
I am his herald to prepare you for
The honor he confers. Be civil, sir,
And he may buy that statue; if he does
Your fortune's made!
Pyg. (*to* Mimos). You'd better send him in. (*Exit* Mimos.)

(*Enter* Chrysos.)

Chry. Well — is the young man's mind prepared?
Daph. It is;
He seems quite calm. Give money for the stone,
I've heard that it is far beyond all price,
But run it down; abuse it ere you buy.
Chry. (*to* Pyg). Where is the statue that I saw last year?
Pyg. Sir — it's unfinished — it's a clumsy thing.
I am ashamed of it.
Chry. It isn't good.
There's want of tone; it's much too hard and thin;
Then the half distances are very crude —
Oh — very crude indeed — then it lacks air,
And wind and motion, massive light and shade;
It's very roughly scumbled; on my soul
The scumbling's damnable!
Daph. (*aside to him*). Bethink yourself!
That's said of painting — this is sculpture!
Chry. Eh?
It's the same thing, the principle's the same;
Now for its price. Let's see — what will it weigh?
Daph. A ton, or thereabouts.
Chry. Suppose we say
A thousand drachmas?
Pyg. No, no, no, my lord!
The work is very crude and thin, and then
Remember, sir, the scumbling —
Chry. Damnable!
But never mind, although the thing is poor,
'Twill serve to hold a candle in my hall.
Pyg. Excuse me, sir; poor though that statue be,
I value it beyond all price.
Chry. Pooh, pooh!
I give a thousand drachmas for a stone
Which in the rough would not fetch half that sum!
Daph. Why bless my soul, young man, are you aware
We gave but fifteen hundred not long since
For an Apollo twice as big as that?
Pyg. But pardon me, a sculptor does not test
The beauty of a figure by its bulk.
Chry. Ah! then *she* does.
Daph. Young man, you'd best take care,
You are offending Chrysos! (*Exit.*)
Chry. And his wife (*going*).
Pyg. I cannot stay to enter into that
Sir, once for all, the statue's not for sale. (*Exit.*)

CHRY. Sir, once for all, I will not be denied;
Confound it — if a patron of the arts
Is thus to be dictated to *by* art,
What comes of that art patron's patronage?
He must be taught a lesson — where's the stone?
(*Goes to pedestal and opens curtains.*)
It's gone.

(*Enter* GALATEA. *He stares at her in astonishment.*)

Hallo! What's this?
GAL. Are you unwell?
CHRY. Oh, no — I fancied just at first — pooh, pooh!
Ridiculous. (*Aside.*) And yet it's very like!
(*Aloud.*) I know your face, haven't I seen you in —
In — in (*puzzling himself*).
GAL. In marble? Very probably.
CHRY. Oh, now I understand. Why this must be
Pygmalion's model! Yes, of course it is.
A very bold-faced woman, I'll be bound.
These models always are.
I'll speak with her.
Come hither, maiden.
GAL. (*who has been examining him in great wonder*). Tell me, what *are* you?
CHRY. What *am* I?
GAL. Yes, I mean, are you a man?
CHRY. Well, yes; I'm told so.
GAL. Then believe them not,
They've been deceiving you.
CHRY. The deuce they have!
GAL. A man is very tall, and straight, and strong,
With big brave eyes, fair face, and tender voice.
I've seen one.
CHRY. *Have* you?
GAL. Yes, you are no man.
CHRY. Does the young person take me for a woman?
GAL. A woman? No; a woman's soft and weak,
And fair, and exquisitely beautiful.
I am a woman; you are not like me.
CHRY. The gods forbid that I should be like you,
And farm my features at so much an hour!
GAL. And yet I like you, for you make me laugh;
You are so round and red, your eyes so small,
Your mouth so large, your face so seared with lines,
And then you are so little and so fat!
CHRY. (*aside*). This is a most extraordinary girl.
GAL. Oh, stay — I understand — Pygmalion's skill
Is the result of long experience.
The individual who modelled you
Was a beginner very probably?
CHRY. (*puzzled*). No. I have seven elder brothers. Strange
That one so young should be so very bold.
GAL. This is not boldness, it is innocence;
Pygmalion says so, and he ought to know.
CHRY. No doubt, but I was not born yesterday. (*Sits.*)
GAL. Indeed! — *I was.*
(*He beckons her to sit beside him.*)
How awkwardly you sit.
CHRY. I'm not aware that there is anything
Extraordinary in my sitting down.
The nature of the seated attitude
Does not leave scope for much variety.
GAL. I never saw Pygmalion sit like that.
CHRY. Don't he sit down like other men?
GAL. Of course!
He always puts his arm around my waist.
CHRY. The deuce he does! Artistic reprobate!
GAL. But you do not. Perhaps you don't know how?
CHRY. Oh yes; I *do* know how!
GAL. Well, do it then!
CHRY. It's a strange whim, but I will humor her. (*Does so.*)
You're sure it's innocence?
GAL. Of course it is.
I tell you I was born but yesterday.
CHRY. Who is your mother?
GAL. Mother! what is that?

I never had one. I'm Pygmalion's child;
Have people usually mothers?
Chry. Well,
That is the rule.
Gal. But then Pygmalion
Is cleverer than most men.
Chry. Yes, I've heard
That he has powers denied to other men,
And I'm beginning to believe it!

(*Enter* Daphne.)

Daph. Why
What's this? (Chrysos *quickly moves away from* Galatea.)
Chry. My wife!
Daph. Can I believe my eyes?
(Galatea *rises.*)
Chry. No!
Daph. Who's this woman? Why, how very like ——
Chry. Like what?
Daph. That statue that we wished to buy,
The self-same face, the self-same drapery,
In every detail it's identical.
Why, one would almost think Pygmalion,
By some strange means, had brought the thing to life,
So marvellous her likeness to that stone!
Chry. (*aside*). A very good idea, and one that I
May well improve upon. It's rather rash,
But desperate ills need desperate remedies.
Now for a good one. Daphne, calm yourself.
You know the statue that we spoke of? Well,
The gods have worked a miracle on it
And it has come to life. Behold it here!
Daph. Bah! Do you think me mad?
Gal. His tale is true.
I was a cold unfeeling block of stone,
Inanimate — insensible — until
Pygmalion, by the ardor of his prayers,
Kindled the spark of life within my frame
And made me what I am!
Chry. (*aside to* Galatea). That's very good;
Go on and keep it up.
Daph. You brazen girl,
I am his wife!
Gal. His wife? (*To* Chrysos.) Then get you hence.
I may not love you when your wife is here.
Daph. Why, what unknown audacity is this?
Chry. It's the audacity of innocence;
Don't judge her by the rules that govern you,
She was born yesterday, and you were *not!*

(*Enter* Mimos.)

Mim. My lord, Pygmalion's here.
Chry. (*aside*). He'll ruin all.
Daph. (*to* Mimos). Who is this woman?
Chry. Why, I've told you, she ——
Daph. Stop, not a word! I'll have it from *his* lips!
Gal. Why ask him when I tell you —?
Daph. Hold *your* tongue!
(*To* Mimos.) Who is this woman? If you tell a lie
I'll have you whipped.
Mim. Oh, I shall tell no lie!
That is a statue that has come to life.
Chry. (*aside to* Mimos). I'm very much obliged to you. (*Gives him money.*)

(*Enter* Myrine.)

Myr. What's this?
Is anything the matter?
Daph. Certainly.
This woman ——
Myr. Is a statue come to life.
Chry. I'm very much obliged to *you!*

(*Enter* Pygmalion.)

Pyg. How now
Chrysos?
Chry. The statue! ——
Daph. Stop!
Chry. Let me explain.
The statue that I purchased ——
Daph. Let me speak.
Chrysos — this girl, Myrine, and your slave,
Have all agreed to tell me that she is ——
Pyg. The statue, Galatea, come to life?
Undoubtedly she is!

CHRY. It seems to me,
I'm very much obliged to every one!

(*Enter* CYNISCA.)

CYN. Pygmalion, my love!
PYG. Cynisca here!
CYN. And even earlier than hoped to be.
(*Aside.*) Why, who are these? (*Aloud.*)
I beg your pardon, sir,
I thought my husband was alone.
DAPH. (*maliciously*). No doubt.
I also thought *my* husband was alone:
We wives are too confiding.
CYN. (*aside to* PYGMALION). Who are these?
PYG. Why, this is Chrysos, this is Daphne. They
Have come —
DAPH. On very different errands, sir.
Chrysos has come to see this brazen girl;
I have come after Chrysos —
CHRY. As you keep
So strictly to the sequence of events
Add this — Pygmalion came after *you!*
CYN. Who is this lady (*alluding to* GALATEA)? Why, impossible!
DAPH. Oh, not at all!
CYN. (*turning to pedestal*). And yet the statue's gone!
PYG. Cynisca, miracles have taken place;
The gods have given Galatea life!
CYN. Oh, marvellous! Is this indeed the form
That my Pygmalion fashioned with his hands?
PYG. Indeed it is.
CYN. Why, let me look at her!
Yes, it's the same fair face — the same fair form;
Clad in the same fair folds of drapery!
GAL. And dost thou know me then?
CYN. Hear her! She speaks!
Our Galatea speaks aloud! Know thee?
Why I have sat for hours, and watched thee grow;
Sat — motionless as thou — wrapped in his work,
Save only that in very ecstasy
I hurried ever and anon to kiss
The glorious hands that made thee all thou art!
Come — let me kiss thee with a sister's love (*Kisses her.*)
See, she *can* kiss.
DAPH. Yes, I'll be bound she can!
CYN. Why my Pygmalion, where's the joy
That ought to animate the face of thine,
Now that the gods have crowned thy wondrous skill?
CHRY. (*aside to* PYG.). Stick to our story; bold-faced though she be,
She's very young, and may perhaps repent;
It's terrible to have to tell a lie,
But if it must be told — why, tell it well!
CYN. I see it all. I have returned too soon.
DAPH. No, I'm afraid you have returned too late;
Cynisca, never leave that man again,
Or leave him altogether!
CYN. (*astonished*). Why, what's this?
GAL. Oh, madam, bear with him, and blame him not;
Judge him not hastily; in every word,
In every thought he has obeyed thy wish.
Thou badst him to speak to me as unto thee;
And he and I have sat as lovingly
As if thou hadst been present to behold
How faithfully thy wishes were obeyed!
CYN. Pygmalion! What is this?
PYG. (*to* GAL.). Go, get thee hence;
Thou shouldst not see the fearful consequence
That must attend those heedless words of thine!
GAL. Judge him not hastily, he's not like this
When he and I are sitting here alone.
He has two voices, and two faces, madam,
One for the world, and one for him and me!
CYN. Thy wife against thine eyes! those are the stakes!
Well, thou hast played thy game, and thou has lost!
PYG. Cynisca, hear me! In a cursed hour
I prayed for power to give that statue life.
My impious prayer aroused the outraged gods,

They are my judges, leave me in their hands;
I have been false to them, but not to thee!
Spare me!
Cyn. Oh, pitiful adventurer!
He dares to lose, but does not dare to pay!
Come, be a man! See, *I* am brave enough
And I have more to bear than thou! Behold!
I am alone, thou hast thy statue bride!
Oh, Artemis, my mistress, hear me now,
Ere I remember how I love that man,
And in that memory forget my shame!
If he in deed or thought hath been untrue,
Be just and let him pay the penalty!
(Pygmalion, *with an exclamation, covers his eyes with his hands.*)
Gal. Cynisca, pity him!
Cyn. I know no pity, woman; for the act
That thawed thee into flesh has hardened me
Into the cursed stone from which thou cam'st.
We have changed places; from this moment forth
Be *thou* the wife and I the senseless stone!
(*Thrusts* Galatea *from her.*)

ACT III

Scene: *Same as Acts I and II*

(*Enter* Daphne.)

Daph. It seems Pygmalion *has* the fearful gift
Of bringing stone to life. I'll question him
And ascertain how far that power extends.

(*Enter* Myrine, *weeping.*)

Myrine — and in tears! Why, what's amiss?
Myr. Oh, we were all so happy yesterday,
And now, within twelve miserable hours,
A blight has fallen upon all of us.
Pygmalion is blind as death itself,
Cynisca leaves his home this very day,
And my Leucippe hath deserted me!
I shall go mad with all this weight of grief!
Daph. All this is Galatea's work?
Myr. Yes, all.
Daph. But can't you stop her? Shut the creature up,
Dispose of her, or break her? Won't she chip?
Myr. No, I'm afraid not.
Daph. Ah, were I his wife,
I'd spoil her beauty! There'd be little chance
Of finding him and her alone again!
Myr. There's little need to take precautions now,
For he, alas! is blind.
Daph. Blind! What of that?
Man has five senses; if he loses one
The vital energy on which it fed
Goes to intensify the other four.
He had five arrows in his quiver; well,
He has shot one away, and four remain.
My dear, an enemy is not disarmed
Because he's lost one arrow out of five!
Myr. The punishment he undergoes might well
Content his wife!
Daph. A happy woman, that!
Myr. Cynisca happy?
Daph. To be sure she is;
She has the power to punish faithlessness,
And she has used it on her faithless spouse.
Had I Cynisca's privilege, I swear
I'd never let my Chrysos rest in peace,
Until he warranted my using it!
Pygmalion's wronged her, and she's punished him.
What more could woman want?

(*Enter* Cynisca.)

Cyn. What more? Why, this!
The power to tame my tongue to speak the words
That would restore him to his former self!
The power to quell the fierce, unruly soul
That battles with my miserable heart!
The power to say, "Oh, my Pygmalion,
"My love is thine to hold or cast away,
"Do with it as thou wilt; it cannot die!"
I'd barter half my miserable life
For power to say these few true words to him!
Myr. Why, then there's hope for him?
Cyn. There's none indeed!

This day I'll leave his home and hide away
Where I can brood upon my shame. I'll fan
The smouldering fire of jealousy until
It bursts forth into an all-devouring flame,
And pray that I may perish in its glow!
Daph. That's bravely said, Cynisca! Never fear;
Pygmalion will give thee wherewithal
To nurture it.
Cyn. (*passionately*). I need not wherewithal!
I carry wherewithal within my heart!
Oh, I can conjure up the scene at will
When he and she sit lovingly alone.
I know too well the devilish art he works
And how his guilty passion shapes itself.
I follow him through every twist and turn
By which he wormed himself into *my* heart;
I hear him breathing to the guilty girl
The fond familiar nothings of *our* love;
I hear him whispering into *her* ear
The tenderness that he rehearsed on me.
I follow him through all his well-known moods —
Now fierce and passionate, now fanciful;
And ever tuning his accursed tongue
To chime in with the passion at her heart:
Oh, never fear that I shall starve the flame!
When jealousy takes shelter in *my* heart,
It does not die for lack of sustenance!
Daph. Come to my home, and thou shall feed it there;
We'll play at widows, and we'll pass our time
Railing against the perfidy of man.
Cyn. But Chrysos? ——
Daph. Chrysos? Oh, you won't see him.
Cyn. How so?
Daph. How so? I've turned him out of doors!
Why, does the girl consider jealousy
Her unassailable prerogative?
Thou hast thy vengeance on Pygmalion —
He can no longer feast upon *thy* face.
Well, Chrysos can no longer feast on mine!
I can't *put out* his eyes (I wish I could!)
But I can *shut* them out, and that I've done.
Cyn. I thank you madam, and I'll go with you.
Myr. No, no; thou shalt not leave Pygmalion;
He will not live if thou desertest him.
Add nothing to his pain — this second blow
Might well complete the work thou hast begun!
Cyn. Nay, let me go — I must not see his face;
For if I look on him I may relent.
Detain me not, Myrine — fare thee well!
(*Exit* Cynisca, Myrine *follows her.*)
Daph. Well, there'll be pretty scenes in Athens now
That statues may be vivified at will.

(Chrysos *enters, unobserved.*)

Why, I have daughters — all of them of age —
What chance is there for plain young women, now
That every man may take a block of stone
And carve a family to suit his tastes?
Chry. If every woman were a Daphne, man
Would never care to look on sculptured stone!
Oh, Daphne!
Daph. Monster — get you hence, away!
I'll hold no converse with you, get you gone.
(*Aside.*) If I'd Cynisca's tongue I'd wither him!
(*Imitating* Cynisca.) "Oh, I can conjure up the scene at will
"Where you and she sit lovingly alone!
"Oh, never fear that I will starve the flame:
"When jealousy takes shelter in *my* heart,
"It does not die for lack of sustenance!"
Chry. I'm sure of that! your hospitality
Is world-renowned. Extend it, love, to me!

Oh, take me home again!
Daph. Home! no, not I!
Why, I've a gallery of goddesses,
Fifty at least — half-dressed bacchantes, too —
Dryads and water nymphs of every kind;
Suppose I find, when I go home to-day,
That they've all taken it into *their* heads
To come to life — what would become of them,
Or me, with Chrysos in the house? No — no,
They're bad enough in marble — but in flesh!!!
I'll sell the bold-faced hussies one and all,
But till I've sold them, Chrysos stops outside!
Chry. What *have* I done?
Daph. What have you *not* done, sir.
Chry. I cannot tell you — it would take too long!
Daph. I saw you sitting with that marble minx,
Your arm pressed lovingly around her waist.
Explain *that* Chrysos.
Chry. It explains itself:
I am a zealous patron of the arts,
And I am very fond of statuary.
Daph. Bah — I've artistic tastes as well as you.
But still, you never saw *me* sitting with
My arms around a stone Apollo's waist!
As for this "statue" — could I see her now,
I'd test your taste for fragments!
Chry. Spare the girl,
She's very young and very innocent;
She claims your pity.
Daph. *Does* she?
Chry. Yes, she does.
If I saw Daphne sitting with her arm
Round an Apollo, I should pity *him.*
Daph. (*relenting*). *Would* you?
Chry. I should, upon my word, I should.
Daph. Well, Chrysos, thou art pardoned. After all
The circumstances were exceptional.
Chry. (*aside*). Unhappily, they were!
Daph. Come home, but mind
I'll sell my gallery of goddesses;
No good can come of animating stone.
Chry. Oh, pardon me — why every soul on earth
Sprang from the stones Deucalion threw behind.
Daph. But then Deucalion only *threw* the stones,
He left it to the gods to fashion them.
Chry. (*aside — looking at her*). And we who've seen the work the gods turn out,
Would rather leave it to Pygmalion!
Daph. (*taking* Chrysos' *arm, who is looking at a statue of Venus*). Come along, do!

(*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter* Myrine, *in great distress.*)

Myr. Pygmalion's heard that he must lose his wife,
And swears, by all the gods that reign above,
He will not live if she deserts him now!
What — what is to be done?

(*Enter* Galatea.)

Gal. Myrine here!
Where is Pygmalion?
Myr. Oh, wretched girl!
Art thou not satisfied with all the ill
Thy heedlessness has worked, that thou art come
To gaze upon thy victim's misery?
Well, thou hast come in time!
Gal. What dost thou mean?
Myr. Why this is what I mean — he will not live
Now that Cynisca has deserted him.
O, girl, his blood will be upon thy head!
Gal. Pygmalion will not live! Pygmalion die!
And I, alas, the miserable cause!
Oh, what is to be done?
Myr. I do not know.
And yet there is one chance, but one alone;
I'll see Cynisca, and prevail on her
To meet Pygmalion but once again.
Gal. (*wildly*). But should she come too late? He may not live
Till she returns.
Myr. I'll send him now to thee,

And tell him that his wife awaits him here.
He'll take thee for Cynisca; when he speaks
Answer thou him as if thou wast his wife.
Gal. Yes, yes, I understand.
Myr. Then I'll begone,
The gods assist thee in this artifice!
(*Exit* Myrine.)
Gal. The gods will help me, for the gods are good.
Oh, Heaven, in this great grief I turn to thee.
Teach me to speak to him, as, ere I lived,
Cynisca spake to him. Oh, let my voice
Be to Pygmalion as Cynisca's voice,
And he will live — for her and not for me —
Yet he will live. I am the fountain head

(*Enter* Pygmalion, *unobserved, led by* Myrine.)

Of all the horrors that surround him now;
And it is fit that I should suffer this;
Grant this, my first appeal — I do not ask
Pygmalion's love; I ask Pygmalion's life.
(Pygmalion *utters an exclamation of joy. She rushes to him and seizes his hand.*)
Pygmalion!
Pyg. I have no words in which
To tell the joy with which I heard that prayer.
Oh, take me to thine arms, my dearly loved!
And teach me once again how much I risked
In risking such a heaven-sent love as thine.
Gal. (*believing that he refers to her*). Pygmalion! my love! Pygmalion!
Once more those words! again! say them again!
Tell me that thou forgivest me the ill
That I unwittingly have worked on thee!
Pyg. Forgive *thee?* Why, my wife, I did not dare
To ask *thy* pardon, and thou askest mine.
The compact with thy mistress Artemis
Gave thee a heaven-sent right to punish me,
I've learnt to take whate'er the gods may send.
(Galatea, *at first delighted, learns in the course of this speech that* Pygmalion *takes her for* Cynisca, *and expresses extreme anguish.*)
Gal. (*with an effort*). But then, this woman, Galatea —
Pyg. Well?
Gal. Thy love for her is dead?
Pyg. I had no love.
Gal. Thou hadst no love?
Pyg. No love. At first, in truth,
In mad amazement at the miracle
That crowned my handiwork, and brought to life
The fair creation of my sculptor's skill,
I yielded to her god-sent influence,
For I had worshipped her before she lived
Because she called Cynisca's face to me;
But when she lived — that love died, word by word.
Gal. That is well said; thou dost not love her then?
She is no more to thee than senseless stone?
Pyg. Speak not of her, Cynisca, for I swear

(*Enter* Cynisca, *unobserved.*)

The unhewn marble of Pentelicus
Hath charms for me, which she, in all her glow
Of womanly perfection, could not match.
Gal. I'm very glad to hear that this is so.
Thou art forgiven! (*Kisses his forehead.*)
Pyg. Thou hast pardoned me,
And though the law of Artemis declared
Thy pardon should restore to me the light
Thine anger took away, I would be blind,
I would not have mine eyes lest they should rest
On her who caused me all this bitterness!
Gal. Indeed, Pygmalion — 'twere better thus —
If thou could'st look on Galatea now,
Thy love for her, perchance, might come again!
Pyg. No, no.

GAL. They say that she endureth pains
That mock the power of words!
PYG. It should be so!
GAL. Hast thou no pity for her?
PYG. No, not I.
The ill that she hath worked on thee — on me —
And on Myrine — surely were enough
To make us curse the hour that gave her life.
She is not fit to live upon this world!
GAL. (*bitterly*). Upon this worthy world, thou sayest well,
The woman shall be seen of thee no more.
(*Takes* CYNISCA'S *hand and leads her to* PYG.)
What would'st thou with her now? *Thou hast thy wife!*
(*She substitutes* CYNISCA, *and retires, weeping.* CYNISCA *takes him to her arms and kisses him. He recovers his sight.*)
PYG. Cynisca! see! the light of day is mine!
Once more I look upon thy well loved face!

(*Enter* MYRINE *and* LEUCIPPE.)

LEUC. Pygmalion! Thou hast thine eyes again!
Come — this is happiness indeed!
PYG. And thou!
Myrine has recalled thee?
LEUC. No, I came,
But more in sorrow than in penitence;
For I've a hardened and a blood-stained heart!
I thought she would denounce me to the law,
But time, I found, had worked a wondrous change;
The very girl, who half-a-day ago
Had cursed me for a ruthless murderer,
Not only pardoned me my infamy,
But absolutely hugged me with delight,
When she, with hungry and unpitying eyes,
Beheld my victim — at the kitchen fire!
The little cannibal!

(*Enter* GALATEA.)

PYG. Away from me,
Woman or statue! Thou the only blight
That ever fell upon my love — begone,
For thou hast been the curse of all who fell
Within the compass of thy waywardness!
CYN. No, no — recall those words, Pygmalion,
Thou knowest not all.
GAL. Nay — let me go from him;
That curse — *his* curse still ringing in mine ears,
For life is bitterer to me than death.
(*She mounts the steps of pedestal.*)
Farewell, Pygmalion! Farewell! farewell!
(*The curtains conceal her.*)
CYN. Thou art unjust to her as I to thee!
Hers was the voice that pardoned thee — not mine.
I knew no pity till she taught it me.
I heard the words she spoke, and little thought
That they would find an echo in my heart;
But so it was. I took them for mine own,
And asking for thy pardon, pardoned thee!
PYG. (*amazed*). Cynisca! Is this so?
CYN. In truth it is!
GAL. (*behind curtain*). Farewell, Pygmalion! Farewell! Farewell!
(PYGMALION *rushes to the veil and tears it away, discovering* GALATEA *as a statue on the pedestal, as in Act I.*)

THE END

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

By OSCAR WILDE

(1892)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Lord Windermere
Lord Darlington
Lord Augustus Lorton
Mr. Cecil Graham
Mr. Dumby
Mr. Hopper
Parker, *butler*
Lady Windermere
The Duchess of Berwick
Lady Agatha Carlisle
Lady Plymdale
Lady Jedburgh
Lady Stutfield
Mrs. Cowper-Cowper
Mrs. Erlynne
Rosalie, *maid*

The Scenes of the Play

ACT I. Morning-Room in Lord Windermere's House
ACT II. Drawing-Room in Lord Windermere's House
ACT III. Lord Darlington's Rooms
ACT IV. Same as Act I

Time — The Present
Place — London

The action of the play takes place within twenty-four hours, beginning on a Tuesday afternoon at five o'clock, and ending the next day at 1.30 p.m.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

ACT I.

SCENE — *Morning-room of* LORD WINDERMERE'S *house in Carlton House Terrace. Doors* C. *and* R. *Bureau with books and papers* R. *Sofa with small tea-table* L. *Window opening on to terrace* L. *Table* R.

LADY WINDERMERE *is at table* R. *Arranging roses in a blue bowl.*

(*Enter* PARKER.)

PARKER. Is your ladyship at home this afternoon?

LADY W. Yes — who has called?

PARKER. Lord Darlington, my lady.

LADY W. (*hesitates for a moment*). Show him up — and I'm at home to any one who calls.

PARKER. Yes, my lady. (*Exit* C.)

LADY W. It's best for me to see him before to-night. I'm glad he's come.

(*Enter* PARKER C.)

PARKER. Lord Darlington.

(*Enter* LORD D. C. *Exit* PARKER.)

LORD D. How do you do, Lady Windermere?

LADY W. How do you do, Lord Darlington? No, I can't shake hands with you. My hands are all wet with these roses. Aren't they lovely? They came up from Selby this morning.

LORD D. They are quite perfect. (*Sees a fan lying on the table.*) And what a wonderful fan! May I look at it?

LADY W. Do. Pretty, isn't it! It's got my name on it, and everything. I have only just seen it myself. It's my husband's birthday present to me. You know to-day is my birthday?

LORD D. No? Is it really?

LADY W. Yes; I'm of age to-day. Quite an important day in my life, isn't it? That is why I am giving this party to-night. Do sit down. (*Still arranging flowers.*)

LORD D. (*sitting down*). I wish I had known it was your birthday, Lady Windermere. I would have covered the whole street in front of your house with flowers to walk on. They are made for you.

(*A short pause.*)

LADY W. Lord Darlington, you annoyed me last night at the Foreign Office. I am afraid you are going to annoy me again.

LORD D. I, Lady Windermere?

(*Enter* PARKER *and* FOOTMAN C. *with tray and tea-things.*)

LADY W. Put it there, Parker. That will do. (*Wipes her hands with her pocket-handkerchief, goes to tea-table* L. *and sits down.*) Won't you come over, Lord Darlington?

(*Exit* PARKER C.)

LORD D. (*takes chair and goes across* L. C.). I am quite miserable, Lady Windermere. You must tell me what I did.

(*Sits down at table* L.)

LADY W. Well, you kept paying me elaborate compliments the whole evening.

LORD D. (*smiling*). Ah, nowadays we are all of us so hard up, that the only pleasant things to pay *are* compliments. They're the only thing we *can* pay.

LADY W. (*shaking her head*). No, I am talking very seriously. You mustn't laugh, I am quite serious. I don't like compliments, and I don't see why a man should think he is pleasing a woman enormously when he says to her a whole heap of things that he doesn't mean.

LORD D. Ah, but I did mean them.

(*Takes tea which she offers him.*)

LADY W. (*gravely*). I hope not. I should be sorry to have to quarrel with you, Lord Darlington. I like you very much, you know that. But I shouldn't like you at all if I thought you were what most other men are. Believe me, you are better than most other men, and I sometimes think you pretend to be worse.

Lord D. We all have our little vanities, Lady Windermere.

Lady W. Why do you make that your special one?

(*Still seated at table* L.)

Lord D. (*still seated* L. C.). Oh, nowadays so many conceited people go about Society pretending to be good, that I think it shows rather a sweet and modest disposition to pretend to be bad. Besides, there is this to be said. If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.

Lady W. Don't you *want* the world to take you seriously, then, Lord Darlington?

Lord D. No, not the world. Who are the people the world takes seriously? All the dull people one can think of, from the bishops down to the bores. I should like *you* to take me very seriously, Lady Windermere, *you* more than any one else in life.

Lady W. Why — why me?

Lord D. (*after a slight hesitation*). Because I think we might be great friends. Let us be great friends. You may want a friend some day.

Lady W. Why do you say that?

Lord D. Oh! — we all want friends at times.

Lady W. I think we're very good friends already, Lord Darlington. We can always remain so as long as you don't —

Lord D. Don't what?

Lady W. Don't spoil it by saying extravagant, silly things to me. You think I am a Puritan, I suppose? Well, I have something of the Puritan in me. I was brought up like that. I am glad of it. My mother died when I was a mere child. I lived always with Lady Julia, my father's eldest sister, you know. She was stern to me, but she taught me, what the world is forgetting, the difference that there is between what is right and what is wrong. *She* allowed of no compromise. *I* allow of none.

Lord D. My dear Lady Windermere!

Lady W. (*leaning back on the sofa*). You look on me as being behind the age. — Well, I am! I should be sorry to be on the same level as an age like this.

Lord D. You think the age very bad?

Lady W. Yes. Nowadays people seem to look on life as a speculation. It is not a speculation. It is a sacrament. Its ideal is Love. Its purification is sacrifice.

Lord D. (*smiling*). Oh, anything is better than being sacrificed!

Lady W. (*leaning forward*). Don't say that.

Lord D. I do say it. I feel it — I know it.

(*Enter* Parker C.)

Parker. The men want to know if they are to put the carpets on the terrace for to-night, my lady?

Lady W. You don't think it will rain, Lord Darlington, do you?

Lord D. I won't hear of its raining on your birthday!

Lady W. Tell them to do it at once, Parker. (*Exit* Parker C.)

Lord D. (*still seated*). Do you think then — of course I am only putting an imaginary instance — do you think, that in the case of a young married couple, say about two years married, if the husband suddenly becomes the intimate friend of a woman of — well, more than doubtful character, is always calling upon her, lunching with her, and probably paying her bills — do you think that the wife should not console herself?

Lady W. (*frowning*). Console herself?

Lord D. Yes, I think she should — I think she has the right.

Lady W. Because the husband is vile should the wife be vile also?

Lord D. Vileness is a terrible word, Lady Windermere.

Lady W. It is a terrible thing, Lord Darlington.

Lord D. Do you know I am afraid that good people do a great deal of harm in this world. Certainly the greatest harm they do is that they make badness of such extraordinary importance. It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious. I take the side of the charming, and you, Lady Windermere, can't help belonging to them.

Lady W. Now, Lord Darlington. (*Rising and crossing* R., *front of him.*) Don't stir, I am merely going to finish my flowers. (*Goes to table* R. C.)

Lord D. (*rising and moving chair*). And I must say I think you are very hard on modern life, Lady Windermere. Of course there is much against it, I admit. Most women, for instance, nowadays, are rather mercenary.

Lady W. Don't talk about such people.

Lord D. Well, then, setting mercenary people aside, who, of course, are dreadful, do you think seriously that women who have committed what the world calls a fault should never be forgiven?

Lady W. (*standing at table*). I think they should never be forgiven.

Lord D. And me? Do you think that there should be the same laws for men as there are for women?

Lady W. Certainly!

Lord D. I think life too complex a thing to be settled by these hard and fast rules.

Lady W. If we had "these hard and fast rules," we should find life much more simple.

Lord D. You allow of no exceptions?

Lady W. None!

Lord D. Ah, what a fascinating Puritan you are, Lady Windermere!

Lady W. The adjective was unnecessary, Lord Darlington.

Lord D. I couldn't help it. I can resist everything except temptation.

Lady W. You have the modern affectation of weakness.

Lord D. (*looking at her*). It's only an affectation, Lady Windermere.

(*Enter* Parker C.)

Parker. The Duchess of Berwick and Lady Agatha Carlisle. (*Exit* Parker C.)

(*Enter the* Duchess of B. *and* Lady A. C. C.)

Duchess of B. (*coming down* C. *and shaking hands*). Dear Margaret, I am so pleased to see you. You remember Agatha, don't you? (*Crossing* L. C.) How do you do, Lord Darlington? I won't let you know my daughter, you are far too wicked.

Lord D. Don't say that, Duchess. As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there are lots of people who say I have never really done anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of course they only say it behind my back.

Duchess of B. Isn't he dreadful? Agatha, this is Lord Darlington. Mind you don't believe a word he says. (Lord Darlington *crosses* R. C.) No, no tea, thank you, dear. (*Crosses and sits on sofa.*) We have just had tea at Lady Markby's. Such bad tea, too. It was quite undrinkable. I wasn't at all surprised. Her own son-in-law supplies it. Agatha is looking forward so much to your ball to-night, dear Margaret.

Lady W. (*seated* L. C.) Oh, you mustn't think it is going to be a ball, Duchess. It is only a dance in honor of my birthday. A small and early.

Lord D. (*standing* L. C.). Very small, very early, and very select, Duchess.

Duchess of B. (*On sofa* L.) Of course it's going to be select. But we know *that*, dear Margaret, about *your* house. It is really one of the few houses in London where I can take Agatha, and where I feel perfectly secure about poor Berwick. I don't know what Society is coming to. The most dreadful people seem to go everywhere. They certainly come to my parties — the men get quite furious if one doesn't ask them. Really, some one should make a stand against it.

Lady W. *I* will, Duchess, I will have no one in my house about whom there is any scandal.

Lord D. (R. C.). Oh, don't say that, Lady Windermere. I should never be admitted! (*Sitting.*)

Duchess of B. Oh, men don't matter. With women it is different. We're good. Some of us are, at least. But we are positively getting elbowed into the corner. Our husbands would really forget our existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time, just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right to do so.

Lord D. It's a curious thing, Duchess,

about the game of marriage — a game, by the way, that is going out of fashion — the wives hold all the honors, and invariably lose the odd trick.

Duchess of B. The odd trick? Is that the husband, Lord Darlington?

Lord D. It would be rather a good name for the modern husband.

Duchess of B. Dear Lord Darlington, how thoroughly depraved you are!

Lady W. Lord Darlington is trivial.

Lord D. Ah, don't say that, Lady Windermere.

Lady W. Why do you *talk* so trivially about life, then?

Lord D. Because I think that life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it. (*Moves up* c.)

Duchess of B. What does he mean? Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington, just explain to me what you really mean?

Lord D. (*coming down back of table*). I think I had better not, Duchess. Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out. Good-bye! (*Shakes hands with* Duchess.) And now (*goes up stage*), Lady Windermere, good-bye. I may come to-night, mayn't I? Do let me come.

Lady W. (*standing up stage with* Lord D.). Yes, certainly. But you are not to say foolish, insincere things to people.

Lord D. (*smiling*). Ah, you are beginning to reform me. It is a dangerous thing to reform any one, Lady Windermere.

(*Bows, and exit* c.)

Duchess of B. (*who has risen, goes* c.). What a charming, wicked creature! I like him so much. I'm quite delighted he's gone! How sweet you're looking! Where *do* you get your gowns? And now I must tell you how sorry I am for you, dear Margaret. (*Crosses to sofa and sits with* Lady W.) Agatha, darling!

Lady A. Yes, mamma. (*Rises.*)

Duchess of B. Will you go and look over the photograph album that I see there?

Lady A. Yes, mamma. (*Goes to table* l.)

Duchess of B. Dear girl! She is so fond of photographs of Switzerland. Such a pure taste, I think. But I really am so sorry for you, Margaret.

Lady W. (*smiling*). Why, Duchess?

Duchess of B. Oh, on account of that horrid woman. She dresses so well, too, which makes it much worse, sets such a dreadful example. Augustus — you know my disreputable brother — such a trial to us all — well, Augustus is completely infatuated about her. It is quite scandalous, for she is absolutely inadmissible into society. Many a woman has a past, but I am told that she has at least a dozen, and that they all fit.

Lady W. Whom are you talking about, Duchess?

Duchess of B. About Mrs. Erlynne.

Lady W. Mrs. Erlynne? I never heard of her, Duchess. And what *has* she to do with me?

Duchess of B. My poor child! Agatha, darling!

Lady A. Yes, mamma.

Duchess of B. Will you go out on the terrace and look at the sunset?

Lady A. Yes, mamma.

(*Exit through window* l.)

Duchess of B. Sweet girl! So devoted to sunsets! Shows such refinement of feeling, does it not? After all, there is nothing like nature, is there?

Lady W. But what is it, Duchess? Why do you talk to me about this person?

Duchess of B. Don't you really know? I assure you we're all so distressed about it. Only last night at dear Lady Fansen's every one was saying how extraordinary it was that, of all men in London, Windermere should behave in such a way.

Lady W. My husband — what has *he* to do with any woman of that kind?

Duchess of B. Ah, what indeed, dear? That is the point. He goes to see her continually, and stops for hours at a time, and while he is there she is not at home to any one. Not that many ladies call on her, dear, but she has a great many disreputable men friends — my own brother in particular, as I told you — and that is what makes it so dreadful about Windermere. We looked upon *him* as being such a model husband, but I am afraid there is no doubt about it. My dear nieces — you know the Saville girls, don't you? — such nice domestic creatures — plain, dreadfully plain, but so good — well, they're always at the window doing fancy work, and making ugly things for the poor, which I think so useful of them in these dreadful socialistic days, and this terrible woman has taken a house in Curzon Street, right opposite them — such a respectable street, too. I don't know what we're coming to! And they tell me that Windermere goes there four and five times a week — they *see* him. They can't help it — and although they never talk scandal, they — well, of course — they remark on it to every one. And the worst of it all is, that I have been told that this woman has got a great deal of money out of somebody, for it seems that she came to London six months ago without anything at all to speak of, and now she has this charming house in Mayfair, drives her pony in the Park every afternoon, and all — well, all — since she has known poor dear Windermere.

Lady W. Oh, I can't believe it!

Duchess of B. But it's quite true, my dear. The whole of London knows it. That is why I felt it was better to come and talk to you, and advise you to take Windermere away at once to Homburg or to Aix where he'll have something to amuse him, and where you can watch him all day long. I assure you, my dear, that on several occasions after I was first married I had to pretend to be very ill, and was obliged to drink the most unpleasant mineral waters, merely to get Berwick out of town. He was so extremely susceptible. Though I am bound to say he never gave away any large sums of money to anybody. He is far too high-principled for that.

Lady W. (*interrupting*). Duchess, Duchess, it's impossible! (*Rising and crossing stage* c.) We are only married two years. Our child is but six months old.

(*Sits in chair* r. *of* l. *table.*)

Duchess of B. Ah, the dear, pretty baby! How is the little darling? Is it a boy or a girl? I hope a girl — Ah, no, I remember it's a boy! I'm so sorry. Boys are so wicked. My boy is excessively immoral. You wouldn't believe at what hours he comes home. And he's only left Oxford a few months — I really don't know what they teach them there.

Lady W. Are *all* men bad?

Duchess of B. Oh, all of them, my dear, all of them, without any exception. And they never grow any better. Men become old, but they never become good.

Lady W. Windermere and I married for love.

Duchess of B. Yes, we begin like that. It was only Berwick's brutal and incessant threats of suicide that made me accept him at all, and before the year was out he was running after all kinds of petticoats, every color, every shape, every material. In fact, before the honeymoon was over, I caught him winking at my maid, a most pretty, respectable girl. I dismissed her at once without a character. — No, I remember I passed her on to my sister; poor dear Sir George is so short-sighted, I thought it wouldn't matter. But it did, though it was most unfortunate. (*Rises.*) And now, my dear child, I must go, as we are dining out. And mind you don't take this little aberration of Windermere's too much to heart. Just take him abroad, and he'll come back to you all right.

Lady W. Come back to me? (c.)

Duchess of B. (l. c.). Yes, dear, these wicked women get our husbands away from us, but they always come back, slightly damaged, of course. And don't make scenes, men hate them!

Lady W. It is very kind of you, Duchess, to come and tell me all this. But I can't believe that my husband is untrue to me.

Duchess of B. Pretty child! I was like that once. Now I know that all men are monsters. (Lady W. *rings bell.*) The only thing to do is to feed the wretches well. A good cook does wonders, and that I know you have. My dear Margaret, you are not going to cry?

Lady W. You needn't be afraid, Duchess, I never cry.

Duchess of B. That's quite right, dear. Crying is the refuge of plain women, but the ruin of pretty ones. Agatha, darling.

Lady A. (*entering* l.). Yes, mamma.

(*Stands back of table* l. c.)

Duchess of B. Come and bid good-bye

to Lady Windermere, and thank her for your charming visit. (*Coming down again.*) And by the way, I must thank you for sending a card to Mr. Hopper — he's that rich young Australian people are taking such notice of just at present. His father made a great fortune by selling some kind of food in circular tins — most palatable, I believe, — I fancy it is the thing the servants always refuse to eat. But the son is quite interesting. I think he's attracted by dear Agatha's clever talk. Of course, we should be very sorry to lose her, but I think that a mother who doesn't part with a daughter every season has no real affection. We're coming to-night, dear.

(Parker *opens* c. *doors.*)

And remember my advice, take the poor fellow out of town at once, it is the only thing to do. Good-bye, once more; come, Agatha. (*Exeunt* Duchess *and* Lady A. c.)

Lady W. How horrible! I understand now what Lord Darlington meant by the imaginary instance of the couple not two years married. Oh! it can't be true — she spoke of enormous sums of money paid to this woman. I know where Arthur keeps his bank-book — in one of the drawers of that desk. I might find out by that. I *will* find out. (*Opens drawer.*) No, it is some hideous mistake. (*Rises and goes* c.) Some silly scandal! He loves *me!* He loves *me!* But why should I not look? I am his wife, I have a right to look! (*Returns to bureau, takes out book and examines it, page by page, smiles and gives a sigh of relief.*) I knew it, there is not a word of truth in this stupid story. (*Puts book back in drawer. As she does so, starts and takes out another book.*) A second book — private — locked! (*Tries to open it, but fails. Sees paper knife on bureau, and with it cuts cover from book. Begins to start at the first page.*) Mrs. Erlynne — £600 — Mrs. Erlynne — £700 — Mrs. Erlynne — £400. Oh! it is true! it is true! How horrible! (*Throws book on floor.*)

(*Enter* Lord W. c.)

Lord W. Well, dear, has the fan been sent home yet? (*Going* r. c. *sees book.*) Margaret, you have cut open my bank book. You have no right to do such a thing!

Lady W. You think it wrong that you are found out, don't you?

Lord W. I think it wrong that a wife should spy on her husband.

Lady W. I did not spy on you. I never knew of this woman's existence till half an hour ago. Some one who pitied me was kind enough to tell me what every one in London knows already — your daily visits to Curzon Street, your mad infatuation, the monstrous sums of money you squander on this infamous woman! (*Crossing* l.)

Lord W. Margaret, don't talk like that of Mrs. Erlynne, you don't know how unjust it is!

Lady W. (*turning to him*). You are very jealous of Mrs. Erlynne's honor. I wish you had been as jealous of mine.

Lord W. Your honor is untouched, Margaret. You don't think for a moment that —

(*Puts book back into desk.*)

Lady W. I think that you spend your money strangely. That is all. Oh, don't imagine I mind about the money. As far as I am concerned, you may squander everything we have. But what I *do* mind is that you who have loved me, you who have taught me to love you, should pass from the love that is given to the love that is bought. Oh, it's horrible! (*Sits on sofa.*) And it is I who feel degraded. *You* don't feel anything. I feel stained, utterly stained. You can't realize how hideous the last six months seem to me now — every kiss you have given me is tainted in my memory.

Lord W. (*crossing to her*). Don't say that, Margaret, I never loved any one in the whole world but you.

Lady W. (*rises*). Who is this woman, then? Why do you take a house for her?

Lord W. I did not take a house for her.

Lady W. You gave her the money to do it, which is the same thing.

Lord W. Margaret, as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne —

Lady W. Is there a Mr. Erlynne — or is he a myth?

Lord W. Her husband died many years ago. She is alone in the world.

Lady W. No relations? (*A pause.*)

Lord W. None.

Lady W. Rather curious, isn't it? (L.)

Lord W. (L. C.). Margaret, I was saying to you — and I beg you to listen to me — that as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne, she has conducted herself well. If years ago —

Lady W. Oh! (*Crossing* R. C.) I don't want details about her life.

Lord W. I am not going to give you any details about her life. I tell you simply this — Mrs. Erlynne was once honored, loved, respected. She was well born, she had a position — she lost everything — threw it away, if you like. That makes it all the more bitter. Misfortunes one can endure — they come from outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults — ah! there is the sting of life. It was twenty years ago, too. She was little more than a girl then. She had been a wife for even less time than you have.

Lady W. I am not interested in her — and — you should not mention this woman and me in the same breath. It is an error of taste.

(*Sitting* R. *at desk.*)

Lord W. Margaret, you could save this woman. She wants to get back into society, and she wants you to help her.

(*Crossing to her.*)

Lady W. Me!

Lord W. Yes, you.

Lady W. How impertinent of her!

(*A pause.*)

Lord W. Margaret, I came to ask you a great favor, and I still ask it of you, though you have discovered what I had intended you should never have known, that I have given Mrs. Erlynne a large sum of money. I want you to send her an invitation for our party to-night.

(*Standing* L. *of her.*)

Lady W. You are mad. (*Rises.*)

Lord W. I entreat you. People may chatter about her, do chatter about her, of course, but they don't know anything definite against her. She has been to several houses — not to houses where you would go, I admit, but still to houses where women who are in what is called Society nowadays do go. That does not content her. She wants you to receive her once.

Lady W. As a triumph for her, I suppose.

Lord W. No; but because she knows that you are a good woman — and that if she comes here once she will have a chance of a happier, a surer life, than she has had. She will make no further effort to know you. Won't you help a woman who is trying to get back?

Lady W. No! If a woman really repents, she never wishes to return to the society that has made or seen her ruin.

Lord W. I beg of you.

Lady W. (*crossing to door* R.). I am going to dress for dinner, and don't mention the subject again this evening. Arthur (*going to him* C.), you fancy because I have no father or mother that I am alone in the world and you can treat me as you choose. You are wrong, I have friends, many friends.

Lord W. (L. C.). Margaret, you are talking foolishly, recklessly. I won't argue with you, but I insist upon your asking Mrs. Erlynne to-night.

Lady W. (R. C.). I shall do nothing of the kind.

(*Crossing* L. C.)

Lord W. (C.). You refuse?

Lady W. Absolutely!

Lord W. Ah, Margaret, do this for my sake; it is her last chance.

Lady W. What has that to do with me?

Lord W. How hard good women are!

Lady W. How weak bad men are!

Lord W. Margaret, none of us men may be good enough for the women we marry — that is quite true — but you don't imagine I would ever — oh, the suggestion is monstrous!

Lady W. Why should *you* be different from other men? I am told that there is hardly a husband in London who does not waste his life over *some* shameful passion.

Lord W. I am not one of them.

Lady W. I am not sure of that.

Lord W. You are sure in your heart. But don't make chasm after chasm between us. God knows the last few minutes have thrust us wide enough apart. Sit down and write the card.

Lady W. Nothing in the whole world would induce me.

Lord W. (*crossing to the bureau*). Then I will.

(*Rings electric bell, sits down and writes card.*)

Lady W. You are going to invite this woman? (*Crossing to him.*)

Lord W. Yes. (*Pause.*)

(*Enter* Parker.)

Lord W. Parker!

Parker. Yes, my lord. (*Comes down* L. C.)

Lord W. Have this note sent to Mrs. Erlynne at No. 84A Curzon Street. (*Crossing to* L. C. *and giving note to* Parker.) There is no answer. (*Exit* Parker C.)

Lady W. Arthur, if that woman comes here, I shall insult her.

Lord W. Margaret, don't say that.

Lady W. I mean it.

Lord W. Child, if you did such a thing, there's not a woman in London who wouldn't pity you.

Lady W. There is not a *good* woman in London who would not applaud me. We have been too lax. We must make an example. I propose to begin to-night. (*Picking up fan.*) Yes, you gave me this fan to-day; it was your birthday present. If that woman crosses my threshold, I shall strike her across the face with it.

Lord W. Margaret, you couldn't do such a thing.

Lady W. You don't know me!

(*Moves* R.)

(*Enter* Parker.)

Lady W. Parker!

Parker. Yes, my lady.

Lady W. I shall dine in my own room. I don't want dinner, in fact. See that everything is ready by half-past ten. And, Parker, be sure you pronounce the names of the guests very distinctly to-night. Sometimes you speak so fast that I miss them. I am particularly anxious to hear the names quite clearly, so as to make no mistake. You understand, Parker?

Parker. Yes, my lady.

Lady W. That will do!

(*Exit* Parker C.)

(*Speaking to* Lord W.) Arthur, if that woman comes here — I warn you —

Lord W. Margaret, you'll ruin us!

Lady W. Us! From this moment my life is separate from yours. But if you wish to avoid a public scandal, write at once to this woman, and tell her that I forbid her to come here!

Lord W. I will not! — I cannot — she must come!

Lady W. Then I shall do exactly as I have said. (*Goes* R.) You leave me no choice. (*Exit* R.)

Lord W. (*calling after her*). Margaret! Margaret! (*A pause.*) My God! What shall I do! I dare not tell her who this woman really is. The shame would kill her.

(*Sinks down into a chair and buries his face in his hands.*)

ACT II.

Scene — *Drawing-room in* Lord W.'s *house. Door* R. U. *opening into ballroom, where band is playing. Door* L. *through which guests are entering. Door* L. U. *opens on an illuminated terrace. Palms, flowers, and brilliant lights. Room crowded with guests.* Lady W. *is receiving them.*

Duchess of B. (*up* C.). So strange Lord Windermere isn't here. Mr. Hopper is very late, too. You have kept those five dances for him, Agatha! (*Comes down.*)

Lady A. Yes, mamma.

Duchess of B. (*sitting on sofa*). Just let me see your card. I'm so glad Lady Windermere has revived cards. — They're a mother's only safeguard. You dear simple little thing! (*Scratches out two names.*) No nice girl should ever waltz with such particularly younger sons! It looks so fast! The last two dances you must pass on the terrace with Mr. Hopper.

(*Enter* Mr. Dumby *and* Lady Plymdale *from the ballroom.*)

Lady A. Yes, mamma.

Duchess of B. (*fanning herself*). The air is so pleasant there.

Parker. Mrs. Cowper-Cowper. Lady Stutfield. Sir James Royston. Mr. Guy Berkeley.

(*These people enter as announced.*)

DUMBY. Good-evening, Lady Stutfield. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

LADY S. I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It's been a delightful season, hasn't it?

DUMBY. Quite delightful! Good-evening, Duchess. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

DUCHESS OF B. I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It has been a very dull season, hasn't it?

DUMBY. Dreadfully dull! Dreadfully dull!

MRS. C.-C. Good-evening, Mr. Dumby. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

DUMBY. Oh, I think not. There'll probably be two more.

(*Wanders back to* LADY P.)

PARKER. Mr. Rufford. Lady Jedburgh and Miss Graham. Mr. Hopper.

(*These people enter as announced.*)

HOPPER. How do you do, Lady Windermere? How do you do, Duchess?

(*Bows to* LADY A.)

DUCHESS OF B. Dear Mr. Hopper, how nice of you to come so early. We all know how you are run after in London.

HOPPER. Capital place, London! They are not nearly so exclusive in London as they are in Sydney.

DUCHESS OF B. Ah! we know your value, Mr. Hopper. We wish there were more like you. It would make life so much easier. Do you know, Mr. Hopper, dear Agatha and I are so much interested in Australia. It must be so pretty with all the dear little kangaroos flying about. Agatha has found it on the map. What a curious shape it is! Just like a large packing-case. However, it is a very young country, isn't it?

HOPPER. Wasn't it made at the same time as the others, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF B. How clever you are, Mr. Hopper. You have a cleverness quite of your own. Now I mustn't keep you.

HOPPER. But I should like to dance with Lady Agatha, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF B. Well, I *hope* she has a dance left. Have you got a dance left, Agatha?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. The next one?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

HOPPER. May I have the pleasure?

(LADY AGATHA *bows.*)

DUCHESS OF B. Mind you take great care of my little chatter-box, Mr. Hopper.

(LADY A. *and* MR. H. *pass into ballroom.*)

(*Enter* LORD W. C.)

LORD W. Margaret, I want to speak to you.

LADY W. In a moment.

(*The music stops.*)

PARKER. Lord Augustus Lorton.

(*Enter* LORD A.)

LORD A. Good-evening, Lady Windermere.

DUCHESS OF B. Sir James, will you take me into the ballroom? Augustus has been dining with us to-night. I really have had quite enough of dear Augustus for the moment.

(SIR JAMES R. *gives the* DUCHESS *his arm and escorts her into the ballroom.*)

PARKER. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bowden. Lord and Lady Paisley. Lord Darlington.

(*These people enter as announced.*)

LORD A. (*coming up to* LORD W.). Want to speak to you particularly, dear boy. I'm worn to a shadow. Know I don't look it. None of us men do look what we really are. Demmed good thing, too. What I want to know is this. Who is she? Where does she come from? Why hasn't she got any demmed relations? Demmed nuisance, relations! But they make one so demmed respectable.

LORD W. You are talking of Mrs. Erlynne, I suppose? I only met her six months ago. Till then I never knew of her existence.

LORD A. You have seen a good deal of her since then.

LORD W. (*coldly*). Yes, I have seen

a good deal of her since then. I have just seen her.

Lord A. Egad! the women are very down on her. I have been dining with Arabella this evening! By Jove! you should have heard what she said about Mrs. Erlynne. She didn't leave a rag on her. . . . (*Aside.*) Berwick and I told her that didn't matter much, as the lady in question must have an extremely fine figure. You should have seen Arabella's expression! . . . But, look here, dear boy. I don't know what to do about Mrs. Erlynne. Egad! I might be married to her; she treats me with such demmed indifference. She's deuced clever, too! She explains everything. Egad! She explains you. She has got any amount of explanations for you — and all of them different.

Lord W. No explanations are necessary about my friendship with Mrs. Erlynne.

Lord A. Hem! Well, look here, dear old fellow. Do you think she will ever get into this demmed thing called Society? Would you introduce her to your wife? No use beating about the confounded bush. Would you do that?

Lord W. Mrs. Erlynne is coming here to-night.

Lord A. Your wife has sent her a card?

Lord W. Mrs. Erlynne has received a card.

Lord A. Then she's all right, dear boy. But why didn't you tell me that before? It would have saved me a heap of worry and demmed misunderstandings!

(Lady A. *and* Mr. H. *cross and exit on terrace* L. U. E.)

Parker. Mr. Cecil Graham!

(*Enter* Mr. Cecil G.)

Cecil G. (*bows to* Lady W., *passes over and shakes hands with* Lord W.). Good-evening, Arthur. Why don't you ask me how I am? I like people to ask me how I am. It shows a widespread interest in my health. Now to-night I am not at all well. Been dining with my people. Wonder why it is one's people are always so tedious? My father would talk morality after dinner. I told him he was old enough to know better. But my experience is that as soon as people are old enough to know better, they don't know anything at all. Hullo, Tuppy! Hear you're going to be married again; thought you were tired of that game.

Lord A. You're excessively trivial, my dear boy, excessively trivial!

Cecil G. By the way, Tuppy, which is it? Have you been twice married and once divorced, or twice divorced and once married? I say, you've been twice divorced and once married. It seems so much more probable.

Lord A. I have a very bad memory. I really don't remember which.

(*Moves away* R.)

Lady P. Lord Windermere, I've something most particular to ask you.

Lord W. I am afraid — if you will excuse me — I must join my wife.

Lady P. Oh, you mustn't dream of such a thing. It's most dangerous nowadays for a husband to pay any attention to his wife in public. It always makes people think that he beats her when they're alone. The world has grown so suspicious of anything that looks like a happy married life. But I'll tell you what it is at supper.

(*Moves towards door of ballroom.*)

Lord W. (C.). Margaret, I *must* speak to you.

Lady W. Will you hold my fan for me, Lord Darlington? Thanks.

(*Comes down to him.*)

Lord W. (*crossing to her*). Margaret, what you said before dinner was, of course, impossible?

Lady W. That woman is not coming here to-night!

Lord W. (R. C.). Mrs. Erlynne is coming here, and if you in any way annoy or wound her, you will bring shame and sorrow on us both. Remember that! Ah, Margaret! only trust me! A wife should trust her husband!

Lady W. (C.). London is full of women who trust their husbands. One can always recognize them. They look so thoroughly unhappy. I am not going to be one of them. (*Moves up.*) Lord Darlington, will you give me back my fan, please? Thanks.

. . . A useful thing, a fan, isn't it? . . . I want a friend to-night, Lord Darlington. I didn't know I would want one so soon.

Lord D. Lady Windermere! I knew the time would come some day; but why to-night!

Lord W. I *will* tell her. I must. It would be terrible if there were any scene. Margaret —

Parker. Mrs. Erlynne.

(Lord W. *starts.* Mrs. E. *enters, very beautifully dressed and very dignified.* Lady W. *clutches at her fan, then lets it drop on the floor. She bows coldly to* Mrs. E., *who bows to her sweetly in turn, and sails into the room.*)

Lord D. You have dropped your fan, Lady Windermere.

(*Picks it up and hands it to her.*)

Mrs. E. (c.). How do you do again, Lord Windermere? How charming your sweet wife looks! Quite a picture!

Lord W. (*in a low voice*). It was terribly rash of you to come!

Mrs. E. (*smiling*). The wisest thing I ever did in my life. And, by the way, you must pay me a good deal of attention this evening. I am afraid of the women. You must introduce me to some of them. The men I can always manage. How do you do, Lord Augustus? You have quite neglected me lately. I have not seen you since yesterday. I am afraid you're faithless. Every one told me so.

Lord A. (r.) Now really, Mrs. Erlynne, allow me to explain.

Mrs. E. (r. c.). No, dear Lord Augustus, you can't explain anything. It is your chief charm.

Lord A. Ah! if you find charms in me, Mrs. Erlynne — (*They converse together.* Lord W. *moves uneasily about the room watching* Mrs. E.)

Lord D. (*to* Lady W.). How pale you are!

Lady W. Cowards are always pale.

Lord D. You look faint. Come out on the terrace.

Lady W. Yes. (*To* Parker.) Parker, send my cloak out.

Mrs. E. (*crossing to her*). Lady Windermere, how beautifully your terrace is illuminated. Reminds me of Prince Doria's at Rome. (Lady W. *bows coldly, and goes off with* Lord D.) Oh, how do you do, Mr. Graham? Isn't that your aunt, Lady Jedburgh? I should so much like to know her.

Cecil G. (*after a moment's hesitation and embarrassment*). Oh, certainly, if you wish it. Aunt Caroline, allow me to introduce Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E. So pleased to meet you, Lady Jedburgh. (*Sits beside her on the sofa.*) Your nephew and I are great friends. I am so much interested in his political career. I think he's sure to be a wonderful success. He thinks like a Tory, and talks like a Radical, and that's so important nowadays. He's such a brilliant talker, too. But we all know from whom he inherits that. Lord Allendale was saying to me only yesterday in the Park, that Mr. Graham talks almost as well as his aunt.

Lady J. (r.). Most kind of you to say these charming things to me! (Mrs. E. *smiles and continues conversation.*)

Dumby (*to* Cecil G.). Did you introduce Mrs. Erlynne to Lady Jedburgh?

Cecil G. Had to, my dear fellow. Couldn't help it. That woman can make one do anything she wants. How, I don't know.

Dumby. Hope to goodness she won't speak to me! (*Saunters towards* Lady P.)

Mrs. E. (c. *to* Lady J.). On Thursday? With great pleasure. (*Rises and speaks to* Lord W. *laughing.*) What a bore it is to have to be civil to these old dowagers. But they always insist on it.

Lady P. (*to* Mr. D.). Who is that well-dressed woman talking to Windermere?

Dumby. Haven't got the slightest idea. Looks like an *édition de luxe* of a wicked French novel, meant specially for the English market.

Mrs. E. So that is poor Dumby with Lady Plymdale? I hear she is frightfully jealous of him. He doesn't seem anxious to speak to me to-night. I suppose he is afraid of her. Those straw-colored women have dreadful tempers. Do you know, I think I'll dance with you first, Windermere. (Lord W. *bites his lip and frowns.*) It will make Lord Augustus so jealous! Lord Augustus! (Lord A. *comes down.*) Lord Windermere insists on my dancing with him first, and, as it's his own house, I can't well refuse. You know I would much sooner dance with you.

Lord A. (*with a low bow*). I wish I could think so, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E. You know it far too well. I can fancy a person dancing through life with you and finding it charming.

Lord A. (*placing his hand on his white waistcoat*). Oh, thank you, thank you. You are the most adorable of all ladies!

Mrs. E. What a nice speech! So simple and so sincere! Just the sort of speech I like. Well, you shall hold my bouquet. (*Goes towards ballroom on* Lord W.'s *arm.*) Ah, Mr. Dumby, how are you? I am so sorry I have been out the last three times you have called. Come and lunch on Friday.

Dumby (*with perfect nonchalance*). Delighted.

(Lady P. *glares with indignation at* Mr. D. Lord A. *follows* Mrs. E. *and* Lord W. *into the ballroom holding bouquet.*)

Lady P. (*to* Mr. D.) What an absolute brute you are! I never can believe a word you say! Why did you tell me you didn't know her? What do you mean by calling on her three times running? You are not to go to lunch there; of course you understand that?

Dumby. My dear Laura, I wouldn't dream of going!

Lady P. You haven't told me her name yet. Who is she?

Dumby. (*coughs slightly and smooths his hair*). She's a Mrs. Erlynne.

Lady P. *That* woman!

Dumby. Yes, that is what every one calls her.

Lady P. How very interesting! How intensely interesting! I really must have a good stare at her. (*Goes to door of ballroom and looks in.*) I have heard the most shocking things about her. They say she is ruining poor Windermere. And Lady Windermere, who goes in for being so proper, invites her! How extremely amusing! It takes a thoroughly good woman to do a thoroughly stupid thing. You are to lunch there on Friday.

Dumby. Why?

Lady P. Because I want you to take my husband with you. He has been so attentive lately, that he has become a perfect nuisance. Now, this woman is just the thing for him. He'll dance attendance upon her as long as she lets him, and won't bother me. I assure you, women of that kind are most useful. They form the basis of other people's marriages.

Dumby. What a mystery you are!

Lady P. (*looking at him*). I wish *you* were!

Dumby. I am — to myself. I am the only person in the world I should like to know thoroughly; but I don't see any chance of it just at present.

(*They pass into the ballroom, and* Lady W. *and* Lord D. *enter from the terrace.*)

Lady W. Yes. Her coming here is monstrous, unbearable. I know now what you meant to-day at tea-time. Why didn't you tell me right out? You should have!

Lord D. I couldn't! A man can't tell these things about another man! But if I had known he was going to make you ask her here to-night, I think I would have told you. That insult, at any rate, you would have been spared.

Lady W. I did not ask her. He insisted on her coming — against my entreaties — against my commands. Oh! the house is tainted for me! I feel that every woman here sneers at me as she dances by with my husband. What have I done to deserve this? I gave him all my life. He took it — used it — spoiled it! I am degraded in my own eyes; and I lack courage — I am a coward! (*Sits down on sofa.*)

Lord D. If I know you at all, I know that you can't live with a man who treats you like this! What sort of life would you have with him? You would feel that he was lying to you every moment of the day. You would feel that the look in his eyes was false, his voice false, his touch false, his passion false. He would come to you when he was weary of others; you would have to comfort him. He would come to you when he was devoted to others; you would have to charm him. You would have to be to him the mask of his real life, the cloak to hide his secret.

Lady W. You are right — you are terribly right. But where am I to turn? You said you would be my friend, Lord Darlington. — Tell me, what am I to do? Be my friend now.

Lord D. Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship. I love you —

Lady W. No, no! (*Rises.*)

Lord D. Yes, I love you! You are more to me than anything in the whole world. What does your husband give you? Nothing. Whatever is in him he gives to this wretched woman, whom he has thrust into your society, into your home, to shame you before every one. I offer you my life —

Lady W. Lord Darlington!

Lord D. My life — my whole life. Take it, and do with it what you will. . . . I love you — love you as I have never loved any living thing. From the moment I met you I loved you, loved you blindly, adoringly, madly! You did not know it then — you know it now! Leave this house tonight. I won't tell you that the world matters nothing, or the world's voice, or the voice of Society. They matter a good deal. They matter far too much. But there are moments when one has to choose between living one's own life, fully, entirely, completely — or dragging out some false, shallow, degrading existence that the world in its hypocrisy demands. You have that moment now. Choose! Oh, my love, choose!

Lady W. (*moving slowly away from him, and looking at him with startled eyes*). I have not the courage.

Lord D. (*following her*). Yes; you have the courage. There may be six months of pain, of disgrace even, but when you no longer bear his name, when you bear mine, all will be well. Margaret, my love, my wife that shall be some day — yes, my wife! You know it! What are you now? This woman has the place that belongs by right to you. Oh! go — go out of this house, with head erect, with a smile upon your lips, with courage in your eyes. All London will know why you did it; and who will blame you? No one. If they do, what matter. Wrong? What is wrong? It's wrong for a man to abandon his wife for a shameless woman. It is wrong for a wife to remain with a man who so dishonors her. You said once you would make no compromise with things. Make none now. Be brave! Be yourself!

Lady W. I am afraid of being myself. Let me think! Let me wait! My husband may return to me. (*Sits down on sofa.*)

Lord D. And you would take him back! You are not what I thought you were. You are just the same as every other woman. You would stand anything rather than face the censure of a world whose praise you would despise. In a week you will be driving with this woman in the Park. She will be your constant guest — your dearest friend. You would endure anything rather than break with one blow this monstrous tie. You are right. You have no courage; none.

Lady W. Ah, give me time to think. I cannot answer you now.

(*Passes her hand nervously over her brow.*)

Lord D. It must be now or not at all.

Lady W. (*rising from the sofa*). Then not at all! (*A pause.*)

Lord D. You break my heart!

Lady W. Mine is already broken.

(*A pause.*)

Lord D. To-morrow I leave England. This is the last time I shall ever look on you. You will never see me again. For one moment our lives met — our souls touched. They must never meet or touch again. Good-bye, Margaret. (*Exit.*)

Lady W. How alone I am in life! How terribly alone!

(*The music stops. Enter the* Duchess of B. *and* Lord P. *laughing and talking. Other guests come on from ballroom.*)

Duchess of B. Dear Margaret, I've just been having such a delightful chat with

Mrs. Erlynne. I am so sorry for what I said to you this afternoon about her. Of course, she must be all right if *you* invite her. A most attractive woman, and has such sensible views on life. Told me she entirely disapproved of people marrying more than once, so I feel quite safe about poor Augustus. Can't imagine why people speak against her. It's those horrid nieces of mine — the Saville girls — they're always talking scandal. Still, I should go to Homburg, dear, I really should. She is just a little too attractive. But where is Agatha? Oh, there she is. (Lady A. *and* Mr. H. *enter from the terrace* L. U. E.) Mr. Hopper, I am very angry with you. You have taken Agatha out on the terrace, and she is so delicate.

Hopper (L. C.). Awfully sorry, Duchess. We went out for a moment and then got chatting together.

Duchess of B. (C.). Ah, about dear Australia, I suppose?

Hopper. Yes.

Duchess of B. Agatha, darling! (*Beckons her over.*)

Lady A. Yes, mamma!

Duchess of B. (*aside*). Did Mr. Hopper definitely —

Lady A. Yes, mamma.

Duchess of B. And what answer did you give him, dear child?

Lady A. Yes, mamma.

Duchess of B. (*affectionately*). My dear one! You always say the right thing. Mr. Hopper! James! Agatha has told me everything. How cleverly you have both kept your secret.

Hopper. You don't mind my taking Agatha off to Australia, then, Duchess?

Duchess of B. (*indignantly*). To Australia? Oh, don't mention that dreadful vulgar place.

Hopper. But she said she'd like to come with me.

Duchess of B. (*severely*). Did you say that, Agatha?

Lady A. Yes, mamma.

Duchess of B. Agatha, you say the most silly things possible. I think on the whole that Grosvenor Square would be a more healthy place to reside in. There are lots of vulgar people live in Grosvenor Square, but at any rate there are no horrid kangaroos crawling about. But we'll talk about that to-morrow. James, you can take Agatha down. You'll come to lunch, of course, James. At half past one instead of two. The Duke will wish to say a few words to you, I am sure.

Hopper. I should like to have a chat with the Duke, Duchess. He has not said a single word to me yet.

Duchess of B. I think you'll find he will have a great deal to say to you to-morrow. (*Exit* Lady A. *with* Mr. H.) And now good-night, Margaret. I'm afraid it's the old, old story, dear. Love — well, not love at first sight, but love at the end of the season, which is so much more satisfactory.

Lady W. Good-night, Duchess.

(*Exit the* Duchess of B. *on* Lord P.'s *arm.*)

Lady P. My dear Margaret, what a handsome woman your husband has been dancing with! I should be quite jealous if I were you! Is she a great friend of yours?

Lady W. No!

Lady P. Really? Good-night, dear. (*Looks at* Mr. D. *and exit.*)

Dumby. Awful manners young Hopper has!

Cecil G. Ah! Hopper is one of Nature's gentlemen, the worst type of gentlemen I know.

Dumby. Sensible woman, Lady Windermere. Lots of wives would have objected to Mrs. Erlynne coming. But Lady Windermere has that uncommon thing called common sense.

Cecil G. And Windermere knows that nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion.

Dumby. Yes; dear Windermere is becoming almost modern. Never thought he would. (*Bows to* Lady W. *and exit.*)

Lady J. Good-night, Lady Windermere. What a fascinating woman Mrs. Erlynne is! She is coming to lunch on Thursday, won't you come too? I expect the Bishop and dear Lady Merton.

Lady W. I am afraid I am engaged, Lady Jedburgh.

LADY J. So sorry. Come, dear.

(*Exeunt* LADY J. *and* MISS G.)

(*Enter* MRS. E. *and* LORD W.)

MRS. E. Charming ball it has been! Quite reminds me of old days. (*Sits on the sofa.*) And I see that there are just as many fools in society as there used to be. So pleased to find that nothing has altered! Except Margaret. She's grown quite pretty. The last time I saw her — twenty years ago, she was a fright in flannel. Positive fright, I assure you. The dear Duchess! and that sweet Lady Agatha! Just the type of girl I like. Well, really, Windermere, if I am to be the Duchess's sister-in-law —

LORD W. (*sitting* L. *of her*). But are you —?

(*Exit* MR. CECIL G. *with rest of guests.* LADY W. *watches with a look of scorn and pain* MRS. E. *and her husband. They are unconscious of her presence.*)

MRS. E. Oh, yes! He's to call to-morrow at twelve o'clock. He wanted to propose to-night. In fact he did. He kept on proposing. Poor Augustus, you know how he repeats himself. Such a bad habit! But I told him I wouldn't give him an answer till to-morrow. Of course I am going to take him. And I dare say I'll make him an admirable wife, as wives go. And there is a great deal of good in Lord Augustus. Fortunately it is all on the surface. Just where good qualities should be. Of course you must help me in this matter.

LORD W. I am not called on to encourage Lord Augustus, I suppose?

MRS. E. Oh, no! I do the encouraging. But you will make me a handsome settlement, Windermere, won't you?

LORD W. (*frowning*). Is that what you want to talk to me about to-night?

MRS. E. Yes.

LORD W. (*with a gesture of impatience*). I will not talk of it here.

MRS. E. (*laughing*). Then we will talk of it on the terrace. Even business should have a picturesque background. Should it not, Windermere? With a proper background women can do anything.

LORD W. Won't to-morrow do as well?

MRS. E. No; you see, to-morrow I am going to accept him. And I think it would be a good thing if I was able to tell him that — well, what shall I say — £2000 a year left me by a third cousin — or a second husband — or some distant relative of that kind. It would be an additional attraction, wouldn't it? You have a delightful opportunity now of paying me a compliment, Windermere. But you are not very clever at paying compliments. I am afraid Margaret doesn't encourage you in that excellent habit. It's a great mistake on her part. When men give up saying what is charming, they give up thinking what is charming. But seriously, what do you say to £2000? £2500, I think. In modern life margin is everything. Windermere, don't you think the world an intensely amusing place? I do!

(*Exit on terrace with* LORD W. *Music strikes up in ballroom.*)

LADY W. To stay in this house any longer is impossible. To-night a man who loves me offered me his whole life. I refused it. It was foolish of me. I will offer him mine now. I will give him mine. I will go to him! (*Puts on cloak and goes to door, then turns back. Sits down at table and writes a letter, puts it into an envelope, and leaves it on table.*) Arthur has never understood me. When he reads this, he will. He may do as he chooses now with his life. I have done with mine as I think best, as I think right. It is he who has broken the bond of marriage — not I. I only break its bondage. (*Exit.*)

(PARKER *enters* L. *and crosses towards the ballroom* R. *Enter* MRS. E.)

MRS. E. Is Lady Windermere in the ballroom?

PARKER. Her ladyship has just gone out.

MRS. E. Gone out? She's not on the terrace?

PARKER. No, madam. Her ladyship has just gone out of the house.

MRS. E. (*starts and looks at the servant with a puzzled expression on her face*). Out of the house?

PARKER. Yes, madam — her ladyship told me she had left a letter for his lordship on the table.

MRS. E. A letter for Lord Windermere?

PARKER. Yes, madam.

MRS. E. Thank you. (*Exit* PARKER. *The music in the ballroom stops.*) Gone out of her house! A letter addressed to her husband! (*Goes over to table and looks at letter. Takes it up and lays it down again with a shudder of fear.*) No, no! It would be impossible! Life doesn't repeat its tragedies like that! Oh, why does this horrible fancy come across me? Why do I remember now the one moment of my life I most wish to forget? Does life repeat its tragedies? (*Tears letter open and reads it, then sinks down into a chair with a gesture of anguish.*) Oh, how terrible! the same words that twenty years ago I wrote to her father! and how bitterly I have been punished for it! No; my punishment, my real punishment is to-night, is now!

(*Still seated* R.)

(*Enter* LORD W. L. U. E.)

LORD W. Have you said good-night to my wife? (*Comes* C.)

MRS. E. (*crushing letter in her hand*). Yes.

LORD W. Where is she?

MRS. E. She is very tired. She has gone to bed. She said she had a headache.

LORD W. I must go to her. You'll excuse me?

MRS. E. (*rising hurriedly*). Oh, no! It's nothing serious. She's only very tired, that is all. Besides, there are people still in the supper-room. She wants you to make her apologies to them. She said she didn't wish to be disturbed. (*Drops letter.*) She asked me to tell you.

LORD W. (*picks up letter*). You have dropped something.

MRS. E. Oh, yes, thank you, that is mine. (*Puts out her hand to take it.*)

LORD W. (*still looking at letter*). But it's my wife's handwriting, isn't it?

MRS. E. (*takes the letter quickly*). Yes, it's — an address. Will you ask them to call my carriage, please?

LORD W. Certainly. (*Goes* L. *and exit.*)

MRS. E. Thanks. What can I do? What can I do? I feel a passion awakening within me that I never felt before. What can it mean? The daughter must not be like the mother — that would be terrible. How can I save her? How can I save my child? A moment may ruin a life. Who knows that better than I? Windermere must be got out of the house; that is absolutely necessary. (*Goes* L.) But how shall I do it? It must be done somehow. Ah!

(*Enter* LORD A. R. U. E. *carrying bouquet.*)

LORD A. Dear lady, I am in such suspense! May I not have an answer to my request?

MRS. E. Lord Augustus, listen to me. You are to take Lord Windermere down to your club at once, and keep him there as long as possible. You understand?

LORD A. But you said you wished me to keep early hours!

MRS. E. (*nervously*). Do what I tell you. Do what I tell you.

LORD A. And my reward?

MRS. E. Your reward? Your reward? Oh! ask me that to-morrow. But don't let Windermere out of your sight to-night. If you do I will never forgive you. I will never speak to you again. I'll have nothing to do with you. Remember you are to keep Windermere at your club, and don't let him come back to-night. (*Exit.*)

LORD A. Well, really, I might be her husband already. Positively I might.

(*Follows her in a bewildered manner.*)

ACT III.

SCENE — LORD DARLINGTON'S *rooms. A large sofa is in front of fireplace* R. *At the back of the stage a curtain is drawn across the window. Doors* L. *and* R. *Table* R. *with writing materials. Table* C. *with syphons, glasses, and Tantalus frame. Table* L. *with cigars and cigarette box. Lamps lit.*

LADY W. (*standing by the fireplace*). Why doesn't he come? This waiting is horrible. He should be here. Why is he not here, to wake by passionate words some fire within me? I am cold — cold as a loveless thing. Arthur must have read my letter by this time. If he cared for me, he would have come after me, would have taken me back by force. But he doesn't care. He's entrammeled by this woman — fascinated by her — dominated by her. If a woman wants to hold a man, she has merely to appeal to what is worst in him. We make gods of men, and they leave us. Others make brutes of them, and they fawn and are faithful. How hideous life is! . . . Oh! it was mad of me to come here, horribly mad. And yet which is the worst, I wonder, to be at the mercy of a man who loves one, or the wife of a man who in one's own house dishonors one? What woman knows? What woman in the whole world? But will he love me always, this man to whom I am giving my life? What do I bring him? Lips that have lost the note of joy, eyes that are blighted by tears, chill hands and icy heart. I bring him nothing. I must go back — no; I can't go back, my letter has put me in their power — Arthur would not take me back! That fatal letter! No! Lord Darlington leaves England to-morrow. I will go with him — I have no choice. (*Sits down for a few moments. Then starts up and puts on her cloak.*) No, no! I will go back, let Arthur do with me what he pleases. I can't wait here. It has been madness my coming. I must go at once. As for Lord Darlington — Oh! here he is! What shall I do? What can I say to him? Will he let me go away at all? I have heard that men are brutal, horrible. . . . Oh! (*Hides her face in her hands.*)

(*Enter* Mrs. E. l.)

Mrs. E. Lady Windermere! (Lady W. *starts and looks up. Then recoils in contempt.*) Thank Heaven I am in time. You must go back to your husband's house immediately.

Lady W. Must?

Mrs. E. (*authoritatively*). Yes, you must! There is not a second to be lost. Lord Darlington may return at any moment.

Lady W. Don't come near me!

Mrs. E. Oh! you are on the brink of ruin; you are on the brink of a hideous precipice. You must leave this place at once, my carriage is waiting at the corner of the street. You must come with me and drive straight home. (Lady W. *throws off her cloak and flings it on the sofa.*) What are you doing?

Lady W. Mrs. Erlynne — if you had not come here, I would have gone back. But now that I see you, I feel that nothing in the whole world would induce me to live under the same roof as Lord Windermere. You fill me with horror. There is something about you that stirs the wildest rage within me. And I know why you are here. My husband sent you to lure me back that I might serve as a blind to whatever relations exist between you and him.

Mrs. E. Oh! You don't think that — you can't.

Lady W. Go back to my husband, Mrs. Erlynne. He belongs to you and not to me. I suppose he is afraid of a scandal. Men are such cowards. They outrage every law of the world, and are afraid of the world's tongue. But he had better prepare himself. He shall have a scandal. He shall have the worst scandal there has been in London for years. He shall see his name in every vile paper, mine on every hideous placard.

Mrs. E. No — no —

Lady W. Yes! he shall. Had he come himself, I admit I would have gone back to the life of degradation you and he had prepared for me — I was going back — but to stay himself at home, and send you as his messenger — oh! it was infamous — infamous.

Mrs. E. (c.). Lady Windermere, you wrong me horribly — you wrong your husband horribly. He doesn't know you are here — he thinks you are safe in your own house. He thinks you are asleep in your own room. He never read the mad letter you wrote to him!

Lady W. (r.). Never read it!

Mrs. E. No — he knows nothing about it.

Lady W. How simple you think me! (*Going to her.*) You are lying to me!

Mrs. E. (*restraining herself*). I am not. I am telling you the truth.

Lady W. If my husband didn't read my letter, how is it that you are here? Who told you I had left the house you were shameless enough to enter? Who told you where I had gone to? My husband told you, and sent you to decoy me back.

(*Crosses* L.)

Mrs. E. (R. C.). Your husband has never seen the letter. I — saw it, I opened it. I — read it.

Lady W. (*turning to her*). You opened a letter of mine to my husband? You wouldn't dare!

Mrs. E. Dare! Oh! to save you from the abyss into which you are falling, there is nothing in the world I would not dare, nothing in the whole world. Here is the letter. Your husband has never read it. He never shall read it. (*Going to fire-place.*) It should never have been written.

(*Tears it and throws it into the fire.*)

Lady W. (*with infinite contempt in her voice and look*). How do I know that was my letter after all? You seem to think the commonest device can take me in!

Mrs. E. Oh! Why do you disbelieve everything I tell you! What object do you think I have in coming here, except to save you from utter ruin, to save you from the consequence of a hideous mistake? That letter that is burning now *was* your letter. I swear it to you!

Lady W. (*slowly*). You took good care to burn it before I had examined it. I cannot trust you. You, whose whole life is a lie, how could you speak the truth about anything?

(*Sits down.*)

Mrs. E. (*hurriedly*). Think as you like about me — say what you choose against me, but go back, go back to the husband you love.

Lady W. (*sullenly*). I do *not* love him!

Mrs. E. You do, and you know that he loves you.

Lady W. He does not understand what love is. He understands it as little as you do — but I see what you want. It would be a great advantage for you to get me back. Dear Heaven! what a life I would have then! Living at the mercy of a woman who has neither mercy nor pity in her, a woman whom it is an infamy to meet, a degradation to know, a vile woman, a woman who comes between husband and wife!

Mrs. E. (*with a gesture of despair*). Lady Windermere, Lady Windermere, don't say such terrible things. You don't know how terrible they are, how terrible and how unjust. Listen, you must listen! Only go back to your husband, and I promise you never to communicate with him again on any pretext — never to see him — never to have anything to do with his life or yours. The money that he gave me, he gave me not through love, but through hatred, not in worship, but in contempt. The hold I have over him —

Lady W. (*rising*). Ah! you admit you have a hold!

Mrs. E. Yes, and I will tell you what it is. It is his love for you, Lady Windermere.

Lady W. You expect me to believe that?

Mrs. E. You must believe it! It is true. It is his love for you that has made him submit to — oh! call it what you like, tyranny, threats, anything you choose. But it is his love for you. His desire to spare you — shame, yes, shame and disgrace.

Lady W. What do you mean? You are insolent! What have I to do with you?

Mrs. E. (*humbly*). Nothing. I know it — but I tell you that your husband loves you — that you may never meet with such love again in your whole life — that such love you will never meet — and that if you throw it away, the day may come when you will starve for love and it will not be given to you, beg for love and it will be denied you — Oh! Arthur loves you!

Lady W. Arthur? And you tell me there is nothing between you?

Mrs. E. Lady Windermere, before Heaven your husband is guiltless of all offense towards you! And I — I tell you that had it ever occurred to me that such a monstrous suspicion would have entered your mind, I would have died rather than have crossed your life or his — oh! died, gladly died!

(*Moves away to sofa* R.)

Lady W. You talk as if you had a heart.

Women like you have no hearts. Heart is not in you. You are bought and sold.

(*Sits* L. C.)

MRS. E. (*starts, with a gesture of pain. Then restrains herself, and comes over to where* LADY W. *is sitting. As she speaks, she stretches out her hands towards her, but does not dare to touch her*). Believe what you choose about me, I am not worth a moment's sorrow. But don't spoil your beautiful young life on my account! You don't know what may be in store for you, unless you leave this house at once. You don't know what it is to fall into the pit, to be despised, mocked, abandoned, sneered at — to be an outcast! to find the door shut against one, to have to creep in by hideous byways, afraid every moment lest the mask should be stripped from one's face, and all the while to hear the laughter, the horrible laughter of the world, a thing more tragic than all the tears the world has ever shed. You don't know what it is. One pays for one's sin, and then one pays again, and all one's life one pays. You must never know that. — As for me, if suffering be an expiation, then at this moment I have expiated all my faults, whatever they have been; for to-night you have made a heart in one who had it not, made it and broken it. — But let that pass. I may have wrecked my own life, but I will not let you wreck yours. You — why, you are a mere girl, you would be lost. You haven't got the kind of brains that enables a woman to get back. You have neither the wit nor the courage. You couldn't stand dishonor. No! Go back, Lady Windermere, to the husband who loves you, whom you love. You have a child, Lady Windermere. Go back to that child who even now, in pain or in joy, may be calling to you. (LADY W. *rises.*) God gave you that child. He will require from you that you make his life fine, that you watch over him. What answer will you make to God if his life is ruined through you? Back to your house, Lady Windermere — your husband loves you. He has never swerved for a moment from the love he bears you. But even if he had a thousand loves, you must stay with your child. If he was harsh to you, you must stay with your child. If he ill-treated you, you must stay with your child. If he abandoned you, your place is with your child.

(LADY W. *bursts into tears and buries her face in her hands.*)

(*Rushing to her.*) Lady Windermere!

LADY W. (*holding out her hands to her, helplessly, as a child might do*). Take me home. Take me home.

MRS. E. (*is about to embrace her. Then restrains herself. There is a look of wonderful joy in her face*). Come! Where is your cloak? (*Getting it from sofa.*) Here. Put it on. Come at once!

(*They go to the door.*)

LADY W. Stop! Don't you hear voices?

MRS. E. No, no! There is no one!

LADY W. Yes, there is! Listen! Oh! that is my husband's voice! He is coming in! Save me! Oh, it's some plot! You have sent for him!

(*Voices outside.*)

MRS. E. Silence! I am here to save you if I can. But I fear it is too late! There! (*Points to the curtain across the window.*) The first chance you have, slip out, if you ever get a chance!

LADY W. But you!

MRS. E. Oh! never mind me. I'll face them.

(LADY W. *hides herself behind the curtain.*)

LORD A. (*outside*). Nonsense, dear Windermere, you must not leave me!

MRS. E. Lord Augustus! Then it is I who am lost!

(*Hesitates for a moment, then looks round and sees door* R., *and exit through it.*)

(*Enter* LORD D., MR. A., LORD W., LORD A. L., *and* CECIL G.)

DUMBY. What a nuisance their turning us out of the club at this hour! It's only two o'clock. (*Sinks into a chair.*) The lively part of the evening is only just beginning.

(*Yawns and closes his eyes.*)

LORD W. It is very good of you, Lord Darlington, allowing Augustus to force our company on you, but I'm afraid I can't stay long.

Lord D. Really! I am so sorry! You'll take a cigar, won't you?

Lord W. Thanks! (*Sits down.*)

Lord A. (*to* Lord W.). My dear boy, you must not dream of going. I have a great deal to talk to you about, of demmed importance, too.

(*Sits down with him at* L. *table.*)

Cecil G. Oh! we all know what that is! Tuppy can't talk about anything but Mrs. Erlynne!

Lord W. Well, that is no business of yours, is it, Cecil?

Cecil G. None! That is why it interests me. My own business always bores me to death. I prefer other people's.

Lord D. Have something to drink, you fellows. Cecil, you'll have a whiskey and soda?

Cecil G. Thanks. (*Goes to the table with* Lord D.) Mrs. Erlynne looked very handsome to-night, didn't she?

Lord D. I am not one of her admirers.

Cecil G. I usen't to be, but I am now. Why! she actually made me introduce her to poor dear Aunt Caroline. I believe she is going to lunch there.

Lord D. (*in surprise*). No?

Cecil G. She is, really.

Lord D. Excuse me, you fellows. I'm going away to-morrow. And I have to write a few letters.

(*Goes to writing table and sits down.*)

Dumby. Clever woman, Mrs. Erlynne.

Cecil G. Hallo, Dumby! I thought you were asleep.

Dumby. I am, I usually am!

Lord A. A very clever woman. Knows perfectly well what a demmed fool I am — knows it as well as I do myself. (Cecil G. *comes towards him laughing.*) Ah! you may laugh, my boy, but it is a great thing to come across a woman who thoroughly understands one.

Dumby. It is an awfully dangerous thing. They always end by marrying one.

Cecil G. But I thought, Tuppy, you were never going to see her again. Yes! you told me so yesterday evening at the club. You said you'd heard —

(*Whispering to him.*)

Lord A. Oh, she's explained that.

Cecil G. And the Wiesbaden affair?

Lord A. She's explained that, too.

Dumby. And her income, Tuppy? Has she explained that?

Lord A. (*in a very serious voice*). She's going to explain that to-morrow.

(Cecil G. *goes back to* C. *table.*)

Dumby. Awfully commercial, women nowadays. Our grandmothers threw their caps over the mills, of course, but by Jove, their granddaughters only throw their caps over mills that can raise the wind for them.

Lord A. You want to make her out a wicked woman. She is not!

Cecil G. Oh! Wicked women bother one. Good women bore one. That is the only difference between them.

Lord D. (*puffing a cigar*). Mrs. Erlynne has a future before her.

Dumby. Mrs. Erlynne has a past before her.

Lord A. I prefer women with a past. They're always so demmed amusing to talk to.

Cecil G. Well, you'll have lots of topics of conversation with *her*, Tuppy.

(*Rising and going to him.*)

Lord A. You're getting annoying, dear boy; you're getting demmed annoying.

Cecil G. (*puts his hands on his shoulders*). Now, Tuppy, you've lost your figure and you've lost your character. Don't lose your temper; you have only got one.

Lord A. My dear boy, if I wasn't the most good-natured man in London —

Cecil G. We'd treat you with more respect wouldn't we, Tuppy? (*Strolls away.*)

Dumby. The youth of the present day are quite monstrous. They have absolutely no respect for dyed hair.

(Lord A. *looks round angrily.*)

Cecil G. Mrs. Erlynne has a very great respect for dear Tuppy.

Dumby. Then Mrs. Erlynne sets an admirable example to the rest of her sex. It is perfectly brutal the way most women nowadays behave to men who are not their husbands.

Lord W. Dumby, you are ridiculous, and Cecil, you let your tongue run away with you. You must leave Mrs. Erlynne alone. You don't really know anything about her, and you're always talking scandal against her.

Cecil G. (*coming towards him* l. c.). My dear Arthur, *I* never talk scandal. *I* only talk gossip.

Lord W. What is the difference between scandal and gossip?

Cecil G. Oh! gossip is charming! History is merely gossip. But scandal is gossip made tedious by morality. Now I never moralize. A man who moralizes is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralizes is invariably plain. There is nothing in the whole world so unbecoming to a woman as a Non-conformist conscience. And most women know it, I'm glad to say.

Lord A. Just my sentiments, dear boy, just my sentiments.

Cecil G. Sorry to hear it, Tuppy; whenever people agree with me, I always feel I must be wrong.

Lord A. My dear boy, when I was your age —

Cecil G. But you never were, Tuppy, and you never will be. (*Goes up* c.) I say, Darlington, let us have some cards. You'll play, Arthur, won't you?

Lord W. No, thanks, Cecil.

Dumby (*with a sigh*). Good heavens! how marriage ruins a man! It's as demoralizing as cigarettes, and far more expensive.

Cecil G. You'll play, of course, Tuppy?

Lord A. (*pouring himself out a brandy and soda at table*). Can't, dear boy. Promised Mrs. Erlynne never to play or drink again.

Cecil G. Now, my dear Tuppy, don't be led astray into the paths of virtue. Reformed, you would be perfectly tedious. That is the worst of women. They always want one to be good. And if we are good, when they meet us, they don't love us at all. They like to find us quite irretrievably bad, and to leave us quite unattractively good.

Lord D. (*rising from* r. *table, where he has been writing letters*). They always do find us bad!

Dumby. I don't think we are bad. I think we are all good except Tuppy.

Lord D. No, we are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. (*Sits down at* c. *table.*)

Dumby. We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars? Upon my word, you are very romantic, to-night, Darlington.

Cecil G. Too romantic! You must be in love. Who is the girl?

Lord D. The woman I love is not free, or thinks she isn't.

(*Glances instinctively at* Lord W. *while he speaks.*)

Cecil G. A married woman, then! Well, there's nothing in the world like the devotion of a married woman. It's a thing no married man knows anything about.

Lord D. Oh! she doesn't love me. She is a good woman. She is the only good woman I have ever met in my life.

Cecil G. The only good woman you have ever met in your life?

Lord D. Yes!

Cecil G. (*lighting a cigarette*). Well, you are a lucky fellow! Why, I have met hundreds of good women. I never seem to meet any but good women. The world is perfectly packed with good women. To know them is a middle-class education.

Lord D. This woman has purity and innocence. She has everything we men have lost.

Cecil G. My dear fellow, what on earth should we men do going about with purity and innocence? A carefully thought-out buttonhole is much more effective.

Dumby. She doesn't really love you then?

Lord D. No, she does not!

Dumby. I congratulate you, my dear fellow. In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst, the last is a real tragedy! But I am interested to hear she does not love you. How long could you love a woman who didn't love you, Cecil?

Cecil G. A woman who didn't love me? Oh, all my life!

Dumby. So could I. But it's so difficult to meet one.

Lord D. How can you be so conceited, Dumby?

Dumby. I didn't say it as a matter of conceit. I said it as a matter of regret. I have been wildly, madly adored. I am sorry I have. It has been an immense nuisance. I should like to be allowed a little time to myself, now and then.

Lord A. (*looking round*). Time to educate yourself, I suppose.

Dumby. No, time to forget all I have learned. That is much more important, dear Tuppy.

(Lord A. *moves uneasily in his chair.*)

Lord D. What cynics you fellows are!

Cecil G. What is a cynic?

(*Sitting on the back of the sofa.*)

Lord D. A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

Cecil G. And a sentimentalist, my dear Darlington, is a man who sees an absurd value in everything, and doesn't know the market price of any single thing.

Lord D. You always amuse me, Cecil. You talk as if you were a man of experience.

Cecil G. I am.

(*Moves up to front of fireplace.*)

Lord D. You are far too young!

Cecil G. That is a great error. Experience is a question of instinct about life. I have got it. Tuppy hasn't. Experience is the name Tuppy gives to his mistakes. That is all.

(Lord A. *looks round indignantly.*)

Dumby. Experience is the name every one gives to their mistakes.

Cecil G. (*standing with his back to fireplace*). One shouldn't commit any.

(*Sees* Lady W.'s *fan on sofa.*)

Dumby. Life would be very dull without them.

Cecil G. Of course you are quite faithful to this woman you are in love with, Darlington, to this good woman?

Lord D. Cecil, if one really loves a woman, all other women in the world become absolutely meaningless to one. Love changes one — I am changed.

Cecil G. Dear me! How very interesting. Tuppy, I want to talk to you.

(Lord A. *takes no notice.*)

Dumby. It's no use talking to Tuppy. You might as well talk to a brick wall.

Cecil G. But I like talking to a brick wall — it's the only thing in the world that never contradicts me! Tuppy!

Lord A. Well, what is it? What is it?

(*Rising and going over to* Cecil G.)

Cecil G. Come over here. I want you particularly. (*Aside.*) Darlington has been moralizing and talking about the purity of love, and that sort of thing, and he has got some woman in his rooms all the time.

Lord A. No, really! really!

Cecil G. (*in a low voice*). Yes, here is her fan. (*Points to the fan.*)

Lord A. (*chuckling*). By Jove! By Jove!

Lord W. (*up by door*). I am really off now, Lord Darlington. I am sorry you are leaving England so soon. Pray call on us when you come back! My wife and I will be charmed to see you!

Lord D. (*up stage with* Lord W.). I am afraid I shall be away for many years. Good-night!

Cecil G. Arthur!

Lord W. What?

Cecil G. I want to speak to you for a moment. No, do come!

Lord W. (*putting on his coat*). I can't — I'm off!

Cecil G. It is something very particular. It will interest you enormously.

Lord W. (*smiling*). It is some of your nonsense, Cecil.

Cecil G. It isn't. It isn't really!

Lord A. (*going to him*). My dear fellow, you mustn't go yet. I have a lot to talk to you about. And Cecil has something to show you.

Lord W. (*walking over*). Well, what is it?

Cecil G. Darlington has got a woman here in his rooms. Here is her fan. Amusing, isn't it?

(*A pause.*)

Lord W. Good God!

(*Seizes the fan —* Dumby *rises.*)

Cecil G. What is the matter?

Lord W. Lord Darlington!

Lord D. (*turning round*). Yes!

Lord W. What is my wife's fan doing

here in your rooms? Hands off, Cecil. Don't touch me.

Lord D. Your wife's fan?

Lord W. Yes, here it is!

Lord D. (*walking towards him*). I don't know!

Lord W. You must know. I demand an explanation. (*To* Cecil G.) Don't hold me, you fool.

Lord D. (*aside*). She is here after all!

Lord W. Speak, sir! Why is my wife's fan here? Answer me, by God! I'll search your rooms, and if my wife's here, I'll — (*Moves.*)

Lord D. You shall not search my rooms. You have no right to do so. I forbid you.

Lord W. You scoundrel! I'll not leave your room till I have searched every corner of it! What moves behind that curtain? (*Rushes towards the curtain* c.)

Mrs. E. (*enters behind* r.). Lord Windermere!

Lord W. Mrs. Erlynne!

(*Every one starts and turns round.* Lady W. *slips out from behind the curtain and glides from the room* l.)

Mrs. E. I am afraid I took your wife's fan in mistake for my own, when I was leaving your house to-night. I am so sorry.

(*Takes fan from him.* Lord W. *looks at her in contempt.* Lord D. *in mingled astonishment and anger.* Lord A. *turns away. The other men smile at each other.*)

ACT IV.

(Scene — *Same as in Act I.*)

Lady W. (*lying on sofa*). How can I tell him? I can't tell him. It would kill me. I wonder what happened after I escaped from that horrible room. Perhaps she told them the true reason of her being there, and the real meaning of that — fatal fan of mine. Oh, if he knows — how can I look him in the face again? He would never forgive me. (*Touches bell.*) How securely one thinks one lives — out of reach of temptation, sin, folly. And then suddenly — Oh! Life is terrible. It rules us, we do not rule it.

(*Enter* Rosalie r.)

Rosalie. Did your ladyship ring for me?

Lady W. Yes. Have you found out at what time Lord Windermere came in last night?

Rosalie. His lordship did not come in till five o'clock.

Lady W. Five o'clock! He knocked at my door this morning, didn't he?

Rosalie. Yes, my lady — at half past nine. I told him your ladyship was not awake yet.

Lady W. Did he say anything?

Rosalie. Something about your ladyship's fan. I didn't quite catch what his lordship said. Has the fan been lost, my lady? I can't find it, and Parker says it was not left in any of the rooms. He has looked in all of them and on the terrace as well.

Lady W. It doesn't matter. Tell Parker not to trouble. That will do.

(*Exit* Rosalie.)

Lady W. (*rising*). She is sure to tell him. I can fancy a person doing a wonderful act of self-sacrifice, doing it spontaneously, recklessly, nobly — and afterwards finding out that it costs too much. Why should she hesitate between her ruin and mine? . . . How strange! I would have publicly disgraced her in my own house. She accepts public disgrace in the house of another to save me. . . . There is a bitter irony in things, a bitter irony in the way we talk of good and bad women. . . . Oh, what a lesson! and what a pity that in life we only get our lessons when they are of no use to us! For even if she doesn't tell, I must. Oh! the shame of it, the shame of it. To tell it is to live through it all again. Actions are the first tragedy in life, words are the second. Words are perhaps the worst. Words are merciless. . . . Oh!

(*Starts as* Lord W. *enters.*)

Lord W. (*kisses her*). Margaret — how pale you look!

Lady W. I slept very badly.

Lord W. (*sitting on sofa with her*). I am so sorry. I came in dreadfully late, and I didn't like to wake you. You are crying, dear.

Lady W. Yes, I am crying, for I have something to tell you, Arthur.

Lord W. My dear child, you are not well. You've been doing too much. Let us go away to the country. You'll be all right at Selby. The season is almost over. There is no use staying on. Poor darling! We'll go away to-day, if you like. (*Rises.*) We can easily catch the 4.30. I'll send a wire to Fannen.

(*Crosses and sits down at table to write a telegram.*)

Lady W. Yes; let us go away to-day. No; I can't go away to-day, Arthur. There is some one I must see before I leave town — some one who has been kind to me.

Lord W. (*rising and leaning over sofa*). Kind to you?

Lady W. Far more than that. (*Rises and goes to him.*) I will tell you, Arthur, but only love me, love me as you used to love me.

Lord W. Used to? You are not thinking of that wretched woman who came here last night? (*Coming round and sitting* R. *of her.*) You don't still imagine — no, you couldn't.

Lady W. I don't. I know now I was wrong and foolish.

Lord W. It was very good of you to receive her last night — but you are never to see her again.

Lady W. Why do you say that?

(*A pause.*)

Lord W. (*holding her hand*). Margaret, I thought Mrs. Erlynne was a woman more sinned against than sinning, as the phrase goes. I thought she wanted to be good, to get back into a place that she had lost by a moment's folly, to lead again a decent life. I believed what she told me — I was mistaken in her. She is bad — as bad as a woman can be.

Lady W. Arthur, Arthur, don't talk so bitterly about any woman. I don't think now that people can be divided into the good and the bad, as though they were two separate races or creations. What are called good women may have terrible things in them, mad moods of recklessness, assertion, jealousy, sin. Bad women, as they are termed, may have in them sorrow, repentance, pity, sacrifice. And I don't think Mrs. Erlynne a bad woman — I know she's not.

Lord W. My dear child, the woman's impossible. No matter what harm she tries to do us, you must never see her again. She is inadmissible anywhere.

Lady W. But I want to see her. I want her to come here.

Lord W. Never!

Lady W. She came here once as *your* guest. She must come now as *mine*. That is but fair.

Lord W. She should never have come here.

Lady W. (*rising*). It is too late, Arthur, to say that now. (*Moves away.*)

Lord W. (*rising*). Margaret, if you knew where Mrs. Erlynne went last night, after she left this house, you would not sit in the same room with her. It was absolutely shameless, the whole thing.

Lady W. Arthur, I can't bear it any longer. I must tell you. Last night —

(*Enter* Parker *with a tray on which lie* Lady W.'s *fan and a card.*)

Parker. Mrs. Erlynne has called to return your ladyship's fan which she took away by mistake last night. Mrs. Erlynne has written a message on the card.

Lady W. Oh, ask Mrs. Erlynne to be kind enough to come up. (*Reads card.*) Say I shall be very glad to see her. (*Exit* Parker.) She wants to see me, Arthur.

Lord W. (*takes card and looks at it.*) Margaret, I *beg* you not to. Let me see her first, at any rate. She's a very dangerous woman. She is the most dangerous woman I know. You don't realize what you're doing.

Lady W. It is right that I should see her.

Lord W. My child, you may be on the brink of a great sorrow. Don't go to meet it. It is absolutely necessary that I should see her before you do.

Lady W. Why should it be necessary?

(*Enter* PARKER.)

PARKER. Mrs. Erlynne.

(*Enter* MRS. E. *Exit* PARKER.)

MRS. E. How do you do, Lady Windermere? (*To* LORD W.) How do you do? Do you know, Lady Windermere, I am so sorry about your fan. I can't imagine how I made such a silly mistake. Most stupid of me. And as I was driving in your direction, I thought I would take the opportunity of returning your property in person, with many apologies for my carelessness, and of bidding you good-bye.

LADY W. Good-bye? (*Moves towards sofa with* MRS. E. *and sits down beside her.*) Are you going away, then, Mrs. Erlynne?

MRS. E. Yes; I am going to live abroad again. The English climate doesn't suit me. My — heart is affected here, and that I don't like. I prefer living in the south. London is too full of fogs and — and serious people, Lord Windermere. Whether the fogs produce the serious people or whether the serious people produce the fogs, I don't know, but the whole thing rather gets on my nerves, and so I'm leaving this afternoon by the Club Train.

LADY W. This afternoon? But I wanted so much to come and see you.

MRS. E. How kind of you! But I am afraid I have to go.

LADY W. Shall I never see you again, Mrs. Erlynne?

MRS. E. I am afraid not. Our lives lie too far apart. But there is a little thing I would like you to do for me. I want a photograph of you, Lady Windermere — would you give me one? You don't know how gratified I should be.

LADY W. Oh, with pleasure. There is one on that table. I'll show it to you. (*Goes across to the table.*)

LORD W. (*coming up to* MRS. E. *and speaking in a low voice*). It is monstrous your intruding yourself here after your conduct last night.

MRS. E. (*with an amused smile*). My dear Windermere, manners before morals!

LADY W. (*returning*). I'm afraid it is very flattering — I am not so pretty as that. (*Showing photograph.*)

MRS. E. You are much prettier. But haven't you got one of yourself with your little boy?

LADY W. *I have.* Would you prefer one of those?

MRS. E. Yes.

LADY W. I'll go and get it for you, if you'll excuse me for a moment. I have one upstairs.

MRS. E. So sorry, Lady Windermere, to give you so much trouble.

LADY W. (*moves to door* R.). No trouble at all, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. Thanks so much. (*Exit* LADY W. R.) You seem rather out of temper this morning, Windermere. Why should you be? Margaret and I get on charmingly together.

LORD W. I can't bear to see you with her. Besides, you have not told me the truth, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. I have not told *her* the truth, you mean.

LORD W. (*standing* C.). I sometimes wish you had. I should have been spared then the misery, the anxiety, the annoyance of the last six months. But rather than my wife should know — that the mother whom she was taught to consider as dead, the mother whom she has mourned as dead, is living — a divorced woman going about under an assumed name, a bad woman preying upon life, as I know you now to be — rather than that, I was ready to supply you with money to pay bill after bill, extravagance after extravagance, to risk what occurred yesterday, the first quarrel I have ever had with my wife. You don't understand what that means to me. How could you? But I tell you that the only bitter words that ever came from those sweet lips of hers were on your account, and I hate to see you next her. You sully the innocence that is in her. (*Moves* L. C.) And then I used to think that with all your faults you were frank and honest. You are not.

MRS. E. Why do you say that?

LORD W. You made me get you an invitation to my wife's ball.

MRS. E. For my daughter's ball — yes.

LORD W. You came, and within an

hour of your leaving the house, you are found in a man's rooms — you are disgraced before every one. (*Goes up stage* c.)

Mrs. E. Yes.

Lord W. (*turning round on her*). Therefore I have a right to look upon you as what you are — a worthless, vicious woman. I have the right to tell you never to enter this house, never to attempt to come near my wife —

Mrs. E. (*coldly*). My daughter, you mean.

Lord W. You have no right to claim her as your daughter. You left her, abandoned her, when she was but a child in the cradle, abandoned her for your lover, who abandoned you in turn.

Mrs. E. (*rising*). Do you count that to his credit, Lord Windermere — or to mine?

Lord W. To his, now that I know you.

Mrs. E. Take care — you had better be careful.

Lord W. Oh, I am not going to mince words for you. I know you thoroughly.

Mrs. E. (*looking steadily at him*). I question that.

Lord W. I *do* know you. For twenty years of your life you lived without your child, without a thought of your child. One day you read in the papers that she had married a rich man. You saw your hideous chance. You knew that to spare her the ignominy of learning that a woman like you was her mother, I would endure anything. You began your blackmailing.

Mrs. E. (*shrugging her shoulders*). Don't use ugly words, Windermere. They are vulgar. I saw my chance, it is true, and took it.

Lord W. Yes, you took it — and spoiled it all last night by being found out.

Mrs. E. (*with a strange smile*). You are quite right, I spoiled it all last night.

Lord W. And as for your blunder in taking my wife's fan from here, and then leaving it about in Darlington's rooms, it is unpardonable. I can't bear the sight of it now. I shall never let my wife use it again. The thing is soiled for me. You should have kept it, and not brought it back.

Mrs. E. I think I *shall* keep it. (*Goes up.*) It's extremely pretty. (*Takes up fan.*) I shall ask Margaret to give it to me.

Lord W. I hope my wife will give it you.

Mrs. E. Oh, I'm sure she will have no objection.

Lord W. I wish that at the same time she would give you a miniature she kisses every night before she prays — It's the miniature of a young, innocent-looking girl with beautiful dark hair.

Mrs. E. Ah, yes, I remember. How long ago that seems! (*Goes to sofa and sits down.*) It was done before I was married. Dark hair and an innocent expression were the fashion then, Windermere! (*A pause.*)

Lord W. What do you mean by coming here this morning? What is your object? (*Crossing* l. c. *and sitting.*)

Mrs. E. (*with a note of irony in her voice*). To bid good-bye to my dear daughter, of course. (Lord W. *bites his underlip in anger.* Mrs. E. *looks at him, and her voice and manner become serious. In her accents as she talks there is a note of deep tragedy. For a moment she reveals herself.*) Oh, don't imagine I am going to have a pathetic scene with her, weep on her neck and tell her who I am, and all that kind of thing. I have no ambition to play the part of a mother. Only once in my life have I known a mother's feelings. That was last night. They were terrible — they made me suffer — they made me suffer too much. For twenty years, as you say, I have lived childless — I want to live childless still. (*Hiding her feelings with a trivial laugh.*) Besides, my dear Windermere, how on earth could I pose as a mother with a grown-up daughter? Margaret is twenty-one, and I have never admitted that I am more than twenty-nine, or thirty at the most. Twenty-nine when there are pink shades, thirty when there are not. So you see what difficulties it would involve. No, as far as I am concerned, let your wife cherish the memory of this dead, stainless mother. Why should I interfere with her illusions? I find it hard enough to keep my own. I lost one illusion last night. I thought I had no heart. I find I have, and a heart doesn't suit me, Windermere. Somehow it doesn't go with modern dress. It makes one look old. (*Takes up hand-mirror from table and looks into it.*) And it spoils one's career at critical moments.

Lord W. You fill me with horror — with absolute horror.

Mrs. E. (*rising*). I suppose, Windermere, you would like me to retire into a convent or become a hospital nurse or something of that kind, as people do in silly modern novels. That is stupid of you, Arthur; in real life we don't do such things — not as long as we have any good looks left, at any rate. No — what consoles one nowadays is not repentance, but pleasure. Repentance is quite out of date. And, besides, if a woman really repents, she has to go to a bad dressmaker, otherwise no one believes in her. And nothing in the world would induce me to do that. No; I am going to pass entirely out of your two lives. My coming into them has been a mistake — I discovered that last night.

Lord W. A fatal mistake.

Mrs. E. (*smiling*). Almost fatal.

Lord W. I am sorry now I did not tell my wife the whole thing at once.

Mrs. E. I regret my bad actions. You regret your good ones — that is the difference between us.

Lord W. I don't trust you. I *will* tell my wife. It's better for her to know, and from me. It will cause her infinite pain — it will humiliate her terribly, but it's right that she should know.

Mrs. E. You propose to tell her?

Lord W. I am going to tell her.

Mrs. E. (*going up to him*). If you do, I will make my name so infamous that it will mar every moment of her life. It will ruin her and make her wretched. If you dare to tell her, there is no depth of degradation I will not sink to, no pit of shame I will not enter. You shall not tell her — I forbid you.

Lord W. Why?

Mrs. E. (*after a pause*). If I said to you that I cared for her, perhaps loved her even — you would sneer at me, wouldn't you?

Lord W. I should feel it was not true. A mother's love means devotion, unselfishness, sacrifice. What could you know of such things?

Mrs. E. You are right. What could I know of such things? Don't let us talk any more about *it*, as for telling my daughter who I am, that I do not allow. It is my secret, it is not yours. If I make up my mind to tell her, and I think I will, I shall tell her before I leave this house — if not, I shall never tell her.

Lord W. (*angrily*). Then let me beg of you to leave our house at once. I will make your excuses to Margaret.

(*Enter* Lady W. R. *She goes over to* Mrs. E. *with the photograph in her hand.* Lord W. *moves to back of sofa, and anxiously watches* Mrs. E. *as the scene progresses.*)

Lady W. I am so sorry, Mrs. Erlynne, to have kept you waiting. I couldn't find the photograph anywhere. At last I discovered it in my husband's dressing-room — he had stolen it.

Mrs. E. (*takes the photograph from her and looks at it*). I am not surprised — it is charming. (*Goes over to sofa with* Lady W. *and sits down beside her. Looks again at the photograph.*) And so that is your little boy! What is he called?

Lady W. Gerard, after my dear father.

Mrs. E. (*laying the photograph down*). Really?

Lady W. Yes. If it had been a girl, I would have called it after my mother. My mother had the same name as myself, Margaret.

Mrs. E. My name is Margaret, too.

Lady W. Indeed!

Mrs. E. Yes. (*Pause.*) You are devoted to your mother's memory, Lady Windermere, your husband tells me.

Lady W. We all have ideals in life. At least we all should have. Mine is my mother.

Mrs. E. Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they are better.

Lady W. (*shaking her head*). If I lost my ideals, I should lose everything.

Mrs. E. Everything?

Lady W. Yes. (*Pause.*)

Mrs. E. Did your father often speak to you of your mother?

Lady W. No, it gave him too much pain. He told me how my mother had died a few months after I was born. His eyes filled with tears as he spoke. Then he begged me never to mention her name to him again. It made him suffer even to hear it. My father — my father really died of a broken heart. His was the most ruined life I know.

Mrs. E. (*rising*). I am afraid I must go now, Lady Windermere.

Lady W. (*rising*). Oh, no, don't.

Mrs. E. I think I had better. My carriage must have come back by this time. I sent it to Lady Jedburgh's with a note.

Lady W. Arthur, would you mind seeing if Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come back?

Mrs. E. Pray don't trouble Lord Windermere, Lady Windermere.

Lady W. Yes, Arthur, do go, please.

(Lord W. *hesitates for a moment, and looks at* Mrs. E. *She remains quite impassive. He leaves the room.*)

(*To* Mrs. E.) Oh, what am I to say to you? You saved me last night!

(*Goes toward her.*)

Mrs. E. Hush — don't speak of it.

Lady W. I must speak of it. I can't let you think that I am going to accept this sacrifice. I am not. It is too great. I am going to tell my husband everything. It is my duty.

Mrs. E. It is not your duty — at least you have duties to others besides him. You say you owe me something?

Lady W. I owe you everything.

Mrs. E. Then pay your debt by silence. That is the only way in which it can be paid. Don't spoil the one good thing I have done in my life by telling it to any one. Promise me that what passed last night will remain a secret between us. You must not bring misery into your husband's life. Why spoil his love? You must not spoil it. Love is easily killed. Oh, how easily love is killed! Pledge me your word, Lady Windermere, that you will *never* tell him. I insist upon it.

Lady W. (*with bowed head*). It is your will, not mine.

Mrs. E. Yes, it is my will. And never forget your child — I like to think of you as a mother. I like you to think of yourself as one.

Lady W. (*looking up*). I always will now. Only once in my life I have forgotten my own mother — that was last night. Oh, if I had remembered her, I should not have been so foolish, so wicked.

Mrs. E. (*with a slight shudder*). Hush, last night is quite over.

(*Enter* Lord W.)

Lord W. Your carriage has not come back yet, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E. It makes no matter. I'll take a hansom. There is nothing in the world so respectable as a good Shrewsbury and Talbot. And now, dear Lady Windermere, I am afraid it is really good-bye. (*Moves up* c.) Oh, I remember. You'll think me absurd, but do you know, I've taken a great fancy to this fan that I was silly enough to run away with last night from your ball. Now, I wonder would you give it to me? Lord Windermere says you may. I know it is his present.

Lady W. Oh, certainly, if it will give you any pleasure. But it has my name on it. It has "Margaret" on it.

Mrs. E. But we have the same Christian name.

Lady W. Oh, I forgot. Of course, do have it. What a wonderful chance our names being the same!

Mrs. E. Quite wonderful. Thanks — it will always remind me of you.

(*Shakes hands with her.*)

(*Enter* Parker.)

Parker. Lord Augustus Lorton. Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come.

(*Enter* Lord A.)

Lord A. Good-morning, dear boy. Good-morning, Lady Windermere. (*Sees* Mrs. E.) Mrs. Erlynne!

Mrs. E. How do you do, Lord Augustus? Are you quite well this morning?

Lord A. (*coldly*). Quite well, thank you, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E. You don't look at all well, Lord Augustus. You stop up too late — it is so bad for you. You really should take more care of yourself. Good-bye, Lord Windermere. (*Goes towards door with a bow to* Lord A. *Suddenly smiles, and looks back at him.*) Lord Augustus! Won't you see me to my carriage? You might carry the fan.

Lord W. Allow me!

Mrs. E. No, I want Lord Augustus. I have a special message for the dear Duchess. Won't you carry the fan, Lord Augustus?

Lord A. If you really desire it, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E. (*laughing*). Of course I do. You'll carry it so gracefully. You would carry off anything gracefully, dear Lord Augustus.

(*When she reaches the door she looks back for a moment at* Lady W. *Their eyes meet. Then she turns, and exit* C., *followed by* Lord A.)

Lady W. You will never speak against Mrs. Erlynne again, Arthur, will you?

Lord W. (*gravely*). She is better than one thought her.

Lady W. She is better than I am.

Lord W. (*smiling as he strokes her hair*). Child, you and she belong to different worlds. Into your world evil has never entered.

Lady W. Don't say that, Arthur. There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded one's self that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice.

Lord W. (*moves down with her*). Darling, why do you say that?

Lady W. (*sits on sofa*). Because I, who had shut my eyes to life, came to the brink. And one who had separated us —

Lord W. We were never parted.

Lady W. We never must be again. Oh, Arthur, don't love me less, and I will trust you more. I will trust you absolutely. Let us go to Selby. In the Rose Garden at Selby, the roses are white and red.

(*Enter* Lord A.)

Lord A. Arthur, she has explained everything! (Lady W. *looks horribly frightened.* Lord W. *starts.* Lord A. *takes* Lord W. *by the arm, and brings him to front of stage.*) My dear fellow, she has explained every demmed thing. We all wronged her immensely. It was entirely for my sake she went to Darlington's rooms — called first at the club. Fact is, wanted to put me out of suspense, and being told I had gone on, followed — naturally — frightened when she heard a lot of men coming in — retired to another room — I assure you, most gratifying to me, the whole thing. We all behaved brutally to her. She is just the woman for me. Suits me down to the ground. All the condition she makes is that we live out of England — a very good thing, too! — Demmed clubs, demmed climate, demmed cooks, demmed everything! Sick of it all.

Lady W. (*frightened*). Has Mrs. Erlynne — ?

Lord A. (*advancing towards her with a bow*). Yes, Lady Windermere, Mrs. Erlynne has done me the honor of accepting my hand.

Lord W. Well, you are certainly marrying a very clever woman.

Lady W. (*taking her husband's hand*). Ah! you're marrying a very good woman.

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

By ARTHUR W. PINERO

(1894)

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PERSONS

Aubrey Tanqueray
Paula
Ellean
Cayley Drummle
Mrs. Cortelyon
Captain Hugh Ardale
Gordon Jayne, M.D.
Frank Misquith, Q.C., M.P.
Sir George Orreyed, Bart.
Lady Orreyed
Morse

Time — The Present Day

The Scene of the First Act is laid at Mr. Tanqueray's rooms, No. 2 x, The Albany, in the month of November; the occurrences of the succeeding Acts take place at his house, "Highercoombe," near Willowmere, Surrey, during the early part of the following year.

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY

THE FIRST ACT

AUBREY TANQUERAY'S *chambers in the Albany — a richly and tastefully decorated room, elegantly and luxuriously furnished: on the right a large pair of doors opening into another room, on the left at the further end of the room a small door leading to a bed-chamber. A circular table is laid for a dinner for four persons, which has now reached the stage of dessert and coffee. Everything in the apartment suggests wealth and refinement. The fire is burning brightly.*

AUBREY TANQUERAY, MISQUITH, *and* JAYNE *are seated at the dinner table.* AUBREY *is forty-two, handsome, winning in manner, his speech and bearing retaining some of the qualities of young manhood.* MISQUITH *is about forty-seven, genial and portly.* JAYNE *is a year or two* MISQUITH'S *senior; soft-speaking and precise — in appearance a type of the prosperous town physician.* MORSE, AUBREY'S *servant, places a little cabinet of cigars and the spirit-lamp on the table beside* AUBREY, *and goes out.*

MISQUITH. Aubrey, it is a pleasant yet dreadful fact to contemplate, but it's nearly fifteen years since I first dined with you. You lodged in Piccadilly in those days, over a hat-shop. Jayne, I met you at that dinner, and Cayley Drummle.

JAYNE. Yes, yes. What a pity it is that Cayley isn't here to-night.

AUBREY. Confound the old gossip! His empty chair has been staring us in the face all through dinner. I ought to have told Morse to take it away.

MISQUITH. Odd, his sending no excuse.

AUBREY. I'll walk round to his lodgings later on and ask after him.

MISQUITH. I'll go with you.

JAYNE. So will I.

AUBREY (*opening the cigar-cabinet*). Doctor, it's useless to tempt you, I know. Frank — (MISQUITH *and* AUBREY *smoke.*) I particularly wished Cayley Drummle to be one of us to-night. You two fellows and Cayley are my closest, my best friends —

MISQUITH. My dear Aubrey!

JAYNE. I rejoice to hear you say so.

AUBREY. And I wanted to see the three of you round this table. You can't guess the reason.

MISQUITH. You desired to give us a most excellent dinner.

JAYNE. Obviously.

AUBREY (*hesitatingly*). Well — I — (*glancing at the clock*) — Cayley won't turn up now.

JAYNE. H'm, hardly.

AUBREY. Then you two shall hear it. Doctor, Frank, this is the last time we are to meet in these rooms.

JAYNE. The last time?

MISQUITH. You're going to leave the Albany?

AUBREY. Yes. You've heard me speak of a house I built in the country years ago, haven't you?

MISQUITH. In Surrey.

AUBREY. Well, when my wife died I cleared out of that house and let it. I think of trying the place again.

MISQUITH. But you'll go raving mad if ever you find yourself down there alone.

AUBREY. Ah, but I shan't be alone, and that's what I wanted to tell you. I'm going to be married.

JAYNE. Going to be married?

MISQUITH. Married?

AUBREY. Yes — to-morrow.

JAYNE. To-morrow?

MISQUITH. You take my breath away! My dear fellow, I — I — of course, I congratulate you.

JAYNE. And — and — so do I — heartily.

AUBREY. Thanks — thanks.

(*There is a moment or two of embarrassment.*)

Misquith. Er — ah — this is an excellent cigar.

Jayne. Ah — um — your coffee is remarkable.

Aubrey. Look here; I dare say you two old friends think this treatment very strange, very unkind. So I want you to understand me. You know a marriage often cools friendships. What's the usual course of things? A man's engagement is given out, he is congratulated, complimented upon his choice; the church is filled with troops of friends, and he goes away happily to a chorus of good wishes. He comes back, sets up house in town or country, and thinks to resume the old associations, the old companionships. My dear Frank, my dear good doctor, it's very seldom that it can be done. Generally, a worm has begun to eat its way into those hearty, unreserved, pre-nuptial friendships; a damnable constraint sets in and acts like a wasting disease; and so, believe me, in nine cases out of ten a man's marriage severs for him more close ties than it forms.

Misquith. Well, my dear Aubrey, I earnestly hope —

Aubrey. I know what you're going to say, Frank. I hope so, too. In the meantime let's face dangers. I've reminded you of the *usual* course of things, but my marriage isn't even the conventional sort of marriage likely to satisfy society. Now, Cayley's a bachelor, but you two men have wives. By the bye, my love to Mrs. Misquith and to Mrs. Jayne when you get home — don't forget that. Well, your wives may not — like — the lady I'm going to marry.

Jayne. Aubrey, forgive me for suggesting that the lady you are going to marry may not like our wives — mine at least; I beg your pardon, Frank.

Aubrey. Quite so; then I must go the way my wife goes.

Misquith. Come, come, pray don't let us anticipate that either side will be called upon to make such a sacrifice.

Aubrey. Yes, yes, let us anticipate it. And let us make up our minds to have no slow bleeding to death of our friendship. We'll end a pleasant chapter here to-night, and after to-night start afresh. When my wife and I settle down at Willowmere it's possible that we shall all come together. But if this isn't to be, for Heaven's sake let us recognize that it is simply because it *can't* be, and not wear hypocritical faces and suffer and be wretched. Doctor, Frank — (*holding out his hands, one to* Misquith, *the other to* Jayne) — good luck to all of us!

Misquith. But — but — do I understand we are to ask nothing? Not even the lady's name, Aubrey?

Aubrey. The lady, my dear Frank, belongs to the next chapter, and in that her name is Mrs. Aubrey Tanqueray.

Jayne (*raising his coffee-cup*). Then, in an old-fashioned way, I propose a toast. Aubrey, Frank, I give you "The Next Chapter!"

(*They drink the toast, saying, "The Next Chapter!"*)

Aubrey. Doctor, find a comfortable chair; Frank, you too. As we're going to turn out by and by, let me scribble a couple of notes now while I think of them.

Misquith *and* Jayne. Certainly — yes, yes.

Aubrey. It might slip my memory when I get back.

(Aubrey *sits at a writing-table at the other end of the room, and writes.*)

Jayne (*to* Misquith *in a whisper*). Frank — (Misquith *quietly leaves his chair, and sits nearer to* Jayne.) What is all this? Simply a morbid crank of Aubrey's with regard to ante-nuptial acquaintances?

Misquith. H'm! Did you notice *one* expression he used?

Jayne. Let me think —

Misquith. "My marriage is not even the conventional sort of marriage likely to satisfy society."

Jayne. Bless me, yes! What does that suggest?

Misquith. That he has a particular rather than a general reason for anticipating estrangement from his friends, I'm afraid.

Jayne. A horrible *mésalliance!* A dairymaid who has given him a glass of milk during a day's hunting, or a little anæmic shopgirl! Frank, I'm utterly wretched!

MISQUITH. My dear Jayne, speaking in absolute confidence, I have never been more profoundly depressed in my life.

(MORSE *enters.*)

MORSE (*announcing*). Mr. Drummle.

(CAYLEY DRUMMLE *enters briskly. He is a neat little man of about five-and-forty, in manner bright, airy, debonair, but with an undercurrent of seriousness.* MORSE *retires.*)

DRUMMLE. I'm in disgrace; nobody realizes that more thoroughly than I do. Where's my host?

AUBREY (*who has risen*). Cayley.

DRUMMLE (*shaking hands with him*). Don't speak to me till I have tendered my explanation. A harsh word from anybody would unman me.

(MISQUITH *and* JAYNE *shake hands with* DRUMMLE.)

AUBREY. Have you dined?

DRUMMLE. No — unless you call a bit of fish, a cutlet, and a pancake dining.

AUBREY. Cayley, this is disgraceful.

JAYNE. Fish, a cutlet, and a pancake will require a great deal of explanation.

MISQUITH. Especially the pancake. My dear friend, your case looks miserably weak.

DRUMMLE. Hear me! hear me!

JAYNE. Now then!

MISQUITH. Come!

AUBREY. Well!

DRUMMLE. It so happens that to-night I was exceptionally early in dressing for dinner.

MISQUITH. For which dinner — the fish and cutlet?

DRUMMLE. For *this* dinner, of course — really, Frank! At a quarter to eight, in fact, I found myself trimming my nails, with ten minutes to spare. Just then enter my man with a note — would I hasten, as fast as cab could carry me, to old Lady Orreyed in Bruton Street? — "sad trouble." Now, recollect, please, I had ten minutes on my hands, old Lady Orreyed was a very dear friend of my mother's, and was in some distress.

AUBREY. Cayley, come to the fish and cutlet!

MISQUITH *and* JAYNE. Yes, yes, and the pancake!

DRUMMLE. Upon my word! Well, the scene in Bruton Street beggars description; the women servants looked scared, the men drunk; and there was poor old Lady Orreyed on the floor of her boudoir like Queen Bess among her pillows.

AUBREY. What's the matter?

DRUMMLE (*to everybody*). You know George Orreyed?

MISQUITH. Yes.

JAYNE. I've met him.

DRUMMLE. Well, he's a thing of the past.

AUBREY. Not dead!

DRUMMLE. Certainly, in the worst sense. He's married Mabel Hervey.

MISQUITH. What!

DRUMMLE. It's true — this morning. The poor mother showed me his letter — a dozen curt words, and some of those ill-spelt.

MISQUITH (*walking up to the fireplace*). I'm very sorry.

JAYNE. Pardon my ignorance — who *was* Mabel Hervey?

DRUMMLE. You don't —? Oh, of course not. Miss Hervey — Lady Orreyed, as she now is — was a lady who would have been, perhaps has been, described in the reports of the Police or the Divorce Court as an actress. Had she belonged to a lower stratum of our advanced civilization she would, in the event of judicial inquiry, have defined her calling with equal justification as that of a dressmaker. To do her justice, she is a type of a class which is immortal. Physically, by the strange caprice of creation, curiously beautiful; mentally, she lacks even the strength of deliberate viciousness. Paint her portrait, it would symbolize a creature perfectly patrician; lance a vein of her superbly-modelled arm, you would get the poorest *vin ordinaire!* Her affections, emotions, impulses, her very existence — a burlesque! Flaxen, five-and-twenty, and feebly frolicsome; anybody's, in less gentle society I should say everybody's, property! That, doctor, was

Miss Hervey who is the new Lady Orreyed. Dost thou like the picture?

Misquith. Very good, Cayley! Bravo!

Aubrey (*laying his hand on* Drummle's *shoulder*). You'd scarcely believe it, Jayne, but none of us really know anything about this lady, our gay young friend here, I suspect, least of all.

Drummle. Aubrey, I applaud your chivalry.

Aubrey. And perhaps you'll let me finish a couple of letters which Frank and Jayne have given me leave to write. (*Returning to the writing-table.*) Ring for what you want, like a good fellow!

(Aubrey *resumes his writing.*)

Misquith (*to* Drummle). Still, the fish and the cutlet remain unexplained.

Drummle. Oh, the poor old woman was so weak that I insisted upon her taking some food, and felt there was nothing for it but to sit down opposite her. The fool! the blackguard!

Misquith. Poor Orreyed! Well, he's gone under for a time.

Drummle. For a time! My dear Frank, I tell you he has absolutely ceased to be. (Aubrey, *who has been writing busily, turns his head towards the speakers and listens. His lips are set, and there is a frown upon his face.*) For all practical purposes you may regard him as the late George Orreyed. To-morrow the very characteristics of his speech, as we remember them, will have become obsolete.

Jayne. But surely, in the course of years, he and his wife will outlive —

Drummle. No, no, doctor, don't try to upset one of my settled beliefs. You may dive into many waters, but there is *one* social Dead Sea — !

Jayne. Perhaps you're right.

Drummle. Right! Good God! I wish you could prove me otherwise! Why, for years I've been sitting, and watching and waiting.

Misquith. You're in form to-night, Cayley. May we ask where you've been in the habit of squandering your useful leisure?

Drummle. Where? On the shore of that same sea.

Misquith. And, pray, what have you been waiting for?

Drummle. For some of my best friends *to come up*. (Aubrey *utters a half-stifled exclamation of impatience; then he hurriedly gathers up his papers from the writing-table. The three men turn to him.*) Eh?

Aubrey. Oh, I — I'll finish my letters in the other room if you'll excuse me for five minutes. Tell Cayley the news.

(*He goes out.*)

Drummle (*hurrying to the door*). My dear fellow, my jabbering has disturbed you! I'll never talk again as long as I live!

Misquith. Close the door, Cayley.

(Drummle *shuts the door.*)

Jayne. Cayley —

Drummle (*advancing to the dinner table*). A smoke, a smoke, or I perish!

(*Selects a cigar from the little cabinet.*)

Jayne. Cayley, marriages are in the air.

Drummle. Are they? Discover the bacillus, doctor, and destroy it.

Jayne. I mean, among our friends.

Drummle. Oh, Nugent Warrinder's engagement to Lady Alice Tring. I've heard of that. They're not to be married till the spring.

Jayne. Another marriage that concerns us a little takes place to-morrow.

Drummle. Whose marriage?

Jayne. Aubrey's.

Drummle. Aub —! (*Looking towards* Misquith.) Is it a joke?

Misquith. No.

Drummle (*looking from* Misquith *to* Jayne). To whom?

Misquith. He doesn't tell us.

Jayne. We three were asked here to-night to receive the announcement. Aubrey has some theory that marriage is likely to alienate a man from his friends, and it seems to me he has taken the precaution to wish us good-bye.

Misquith. No, no.

Jayne. Practically, surely.

Drummle (*thoughtfully*). Marriage in general, does he mean, or *this* marriage?

Jayne. That's the point. Frank says —

Misquith. No, no, no; I feared it suggested —

Jayne. Well, well, (*To* Drummle.) What do you think of it?

Drummle (*after a slight pause*). Is there a light there? (*Lighting his cigar.*) He — wraps the lady — in mystery — you say?

Misquith. Most modestly.

Drummle. Aubrey's — not — a very — young man.

Jayne. Forty-three.

Drummle. Ah! *L'âge critique!*

Misquith. A dangerous age — yes, yes.

Drummle. When you two fellows go home, do you mind leaving me behind here?

Misquith. Not at all.

Jayne. By all means.

Drummle. All right. (*Anxiously.*) Deuce take it, the man's second marriage mustn't be another mistake!

(*With his head bent he walks up to the fireplace.*)

Jayne. You knew him in his short married life, Cayley. Terribly unsatisfactory, wasn't it?

Drummle. Well — (*Looking at the door.*) I quite closed that door?

Misquith. Yes.

(*Settles himself on the sofa;* Jayne *is seated in an arm-chair.*)

Drummle (*smoking with his back to the fire*). He married a Miss Herriott; that was in the year eighteen — confound dates — twenty years ago. She was a lovely creature — by Jove, she was; by religion a Roman Catholic. She was one of your cold sort, you know — all marble arms and black velvet. I remember her with painful distinctness as the only woman who ever made me nervous.

Misquith. Ha, ha!

Drummle. He loved her — to distraction, as they say. Jupiter, how fervently that poor devil courted her! But I don't believe she allowed him even to squeeze her fingers. She *was* an iceberg! As for kissing, the mere contact would have given him chapped lips. However, he married her and took her away, the latter greatly to my relief.

Jayne. Abroad, you mean?

Drummle. Eh? Yes. I imagine he gratified her by renting a villa in Lapland, but I don't know. After a while they returned, and then I saw how woefully Aubrey had miscalculated results.

Jayne. Miscalculated —?

Drummle. He had reckoned, poor wretch, that in the early days of marriage she would thaw. But she didn't. I used to picture him closing his doors and making up the fire in the hope of seeing her features relax. Bless her, the thaw never set in! I believe she kept a thermometer in her stays and always registered ten degrees below zero. However, in time a child came — a daughter.

Jayne. Didn't that —?

Drummle. Not a bit of it; it made matters worse. Frightened at her failure to stir up in him some sympathetic religious belief, she determined upon strong measures with regard to the child. He opposed her for a miserable year or so, but she wore him down, and the insensible little brat was placed in a convent, first in France, then in Ireland. Not long afterwards the mother died, strangely enough, of fever, the only warmth, I believe, that ever came to that woman's body.

Misquith. Don't, Cayley!

Jayne. The child is living, we know.

Drummle. Yes, if you choose to call it living. Miss Tanqueray — a young woman of nineteen now — is in the Loretto convent at Armagh. She professes to have found her true vocation in a religious life, and within a month or two will take final vows.

Misquith. He ought to have removed his daughter from the convent when the mother died.

Drummle. Yes, yes, but absolutely at the end there was reconciliation between husband and wife, and she won his promise that the child should complete her conventual education. He reaped his reward. When he attempted to gain his girl's confidence and affection he was too late; he found he was dealing with the spirit of the mother. You remember his visit to Ireland last month?

Jayne. Yes.

Drummle. That was to wish his girl good-bye.

MISQUITH. Poor fellow!

DRUMMLE. He sent for me when he came back. I think he must have had a lingering hope that the girl would relent — would come to life, as it were — at the last moment, for, for an hour or so, in this room, he was terribly shaken. I'm sure he'd clung to that hope from the persistent way in which he kept breaking off in his talk to repeat one dismal word, as if he couldn't realize his position without dinning this damned word into his head.

JAYNE. What word was that?

DRUMMLE. Alone — alone.

(AUBREY *enters.*)

AUBREY. A thousand apologies!

DRUMMLE (*gayly*). We are talking about you, my dear Aubrey.

(*During the telling of the story,* MISQUITH *has risen and gone to the fire, and* DRUMMLE *has thrown himself full-length on the sofa.* AUBREY *now joins* MISQUITH *and* JAYNE.)

AUBREY. Well, Cayley, are you surprised?

DRUMMLE. Surp—! I haven't been surprised for twenty years.

AUBREY. And you're not angry with me?

DRUMMLE. Angry! (*Rising.*) Because you considerately withhold the name of a lady with whom it is now the object of my life to become acquainted? My dear fellow, you pique my curiosity, you give zest to my existence! And as for a wedding, who on earth wants to attend that familiar and probably draughty function? Ugh! My cigar's out.

AUBREY. Let's talk about something else.

MISQUITH (*looking at his watch*). Not to-night, Aubrey.

AUBREY. My dear Frank!

MISQUITH. I go up to Scotland to-morrow, and there are some little matters —

JAYNE. I am off too.

AUBREY. No, no.

JAYNE. I must: I have to give a look to a case in Clifford Street on my way home.

AUBREY (*going to the door*). Well! (MISQUITH *and* JAYNE *exchange looks with* DRUMMLE. *Opening the door and calling.*) Morse, hats and coats! I shall write to you all next week from Genoa or Florence. Now, doctor, Frank, remember, my love to Mrs. Misquith and to Mrs. Jayne!

(MORSE *enters with hats and coats.*)

MISQUITH *and* JAYNE. Yes, yes — yes, yes.

AUBREY. And your young people!

(*As* MISQUITH *and* JAYNE *put on their coats there is the clatter of careless talk.*)

JAYNE. Cayley, I meet you at dinner on Sunday.

DRUMMLE. At the Stratfields'. That's very pleasant.

MISQUITH (*putting on his coat with* AUBREY'S *aid*). Ah-h!

AUBREY. What's wrong?

MISQUITH. A twinge. Why didn't I go to Aix in August?

JAYNE (*shaking hands with* DRUMMLE). Good-night, Cayley.

DRUMMLE. Good-night, my dear doctor!

MISQUITH (*shaking hands with* DRUMMLE). Cayley, are you in town for long?

DRUMMLE. Dear friend, I'm nowhere for long. Good-night.

MISQUITH. Good-night.

(AUBREY, JAYNE, *and* MISQUITH *go out, followed by* MORSE; *the hum of talk is continued outside.*)

AUBREY. A cigar, Frank.

MISQUITH. No, thank you.

AUBREY. Going to walk, doctor?

JAYNE. If Frank will.

MISQUITH. By all means.

AUBREY. It's a cold night.

(*The door is closed.* DRUMMLE *remains standing with his coat on his arm and his hat in his hand.*)

DRUMMLE (*to himself, thoughtfully*). Now then! What the devil! —

(AUBREY *returns.*)

AUBREY (*eyeing* DRUMMLE *a little awkwardly*). Well, Cayley?

DRUMMLE. Well, Aubrey?

(AUBREY *walks up to the fire and stands looking into it.*)

AUBREY. You're not going, old chap?

DRUMMLE (*sitting*). No.

AUBREY (*after a slight pause, with a forced laugh*). Hah, Cayley, I never thought I should feel — shy — with you.

DRUMMLE. Why do you?

AUBREY. Never mind.

DRUMMLE. Now, I can quite understand a man wishing to be married in the dark, as it were.

AUBREY. You can?

DRUMMLE. In your place I should very likely adopt the same course.

AUBREY. You think so?

DRUMMLE. And if I intended marrying a lady not prominently in society, as I presume you do — as I presume you do —

AUBREY. Well?

DRUMMLE. As I presume you do, I'm not sure that *I* should tender her for preliminary dissection at afternoon tea-tables.

AUBREY. No?

DRUMMLE. In fact, there is probably only one person — were I in your position to-night — with whom I should care to chat the matter over.

AUBREY. Who's that?

DRUMMLE. Yourself, of course. (*Going to* AUBREY *and standing beside him.*) Of course, yourself, old friend.

AUBREY (*after a pause*). I must seem a brute to you, Cayley. But there are some acts which are hard to explain, hard to defend —

DRUMMLE. To defend —

AUBREY. Some acts which one must trust to time to put right.

(DRUMMLE *watches him for a moment, then takes up his hat and coat.*)

DRUMMLE. Well, I'll be moving.

AUBREY. Cayley! Confound you and your old friendship! Do you think I forget it? Put your coat down! Why did you stay behind here? Cayley, the lady I am going to marry is the lady — who is known as — Mrs. Jarman.

(*There is a pause.*)

DRUMMLE (*in a low voice*). Mrs. Jarman! are you serious?

(*He walks up to the fireplace, where he leans upon the mantelpiece uttering something like a groan.*)

AUBREY. As you've got this out of me I give you leave to say all you care to say. Come, we'll be plain with each other. You know Mrs. Jarman?

DRUMMLE. I first met her at — what does it matter?

AUBREY. Yes, yes, everything! Come!

DRUMMLE. I met her at Homburg, two — three seasons ago.

AUBREY. Not as Mrs. Jarman?

DRUMMLE. No.

AUBREY. She was then —?

DRUMMLE. Mrs. Dartry.

AUBREY. Yes. She has also seen you in London, she says.

DRUMMLE. Certainly.

AUBREY. In Alford Street. Go on.

DRUMMLE. Please!

AUBREY. I insist.

DRUMMLE (*with a slight shrug of the shoulders*). Some time last year I was asked by a man to sup at his house, one night after the theater.

AUBREY. Mr. Selwyn Ethurst — a bachelor.

DRUMMLE. Yes.

AUBREY. You were surprised therefore to find Mr. Ethurst aided in his cursed hospitality by a lady.

DRUMMLE. I was unprepared.

AUBREY. The lady you had known as Mrs. Dartry? (DRUMMLE *inclines his head silently.*) There is something of a yachting cruise in the Mediterranean, too, is there not?

DRUMMLE. I joined Peter Jarman's yacht at Marseilles, in the Spring, a month before he died.

AUBREY. Mrs. Jarman was on board?

DRUMMLE. She was a kind hostess.

AUBREY. And an old acquaintance?

DRUMMLE. Yes.

AUBREY. You have told your story.

DRUMMLE. With your assistance.

AUBREY. I have put you to the pain of telling it to show you that this is not the case of a blind man entrapped by an artful woman. Let me add that Mrs. Jarman has no legal right to that name; that she is simply Miss Ray — Miss Paula Ray.

DRUMMLE (*after a pause*). I should like to express my regret, Aubrey, for the way in which I spoke of George Orreyed's marriage.

Aubrey. You mean you compare Lady Orreyed with Miss Ray? (Drummle *is silent.*) Oh, of course! To you, Cayley, all women who have been roughly treated, and who dare to survive by borrowing a little of our philosophy, are alike. You see in the crowd of the ill-used only one pattern; you can't detect the shades of goodness, intelligence, even nobility there. Well, how should you? The crowd is dimly lighted! And, besides, yours is the way of the world.

Drummle. My dear Aubrey, I *live* in the world.

Aubrey. The name we give our little parish of St. James's.

Drummle (*laying a hand on* Aubrey's *shoulder*). And you are quite prepared, my friend, to forfeit the esteem of your little parish?

Aubrey. I avoid mortification by shifting from one parish to another. I give up Pall Mall for the Surrey hills; leave off varnishing my boots, and double the thickness of the soles.

Drummle. And your skin — do you double the thickness of that also?

Aubrey. I know you think me a fool, Cayley — you needn't infer that I'm a coward into the bargain. No! I know what I'm doing, and I do it deliberately, defiantly. I'm alone: I injure no living soul by the step I'm going to take; and so you can't urge the one argument which might restrain me. Of course, I don't expect you to think compassionately, fairly even, of the woman whom I — whom I am drawn to —

Drummle. My dear Aubrey, I assure you I consider Mrs. — Miss Jarman — Mrs. Ray — Miss Ray — delightful. But I confess there is a form of chivalry which I gravely distrust, especially in a man of — our age.

Aubrey. Thanks. I've heard you say that from forty till fifty a man is at heart either a stoic or a satyr.

Drummle (*protestingly*). Ah! now —

Aubrey. I am neither. I have a temperate, honorable affection for Mrs. Jarman. She has never met a man who has treated her well — I intend to treat her well. That's all. And in a few years, Cayley, if you've not quite forsaken me, I'll prove to you that it's possible to rear a life of happiness, of good repute, on a — miserable foundation.

Drummle (*offering his hand*). Do prove it!

Aubrey (*taking his hand*). We have spoken too freely of — of Mrs. Jarman. I was excited — angry. Please forget it!

Drummle. My dear Aubrey, when we next meet I shall remember nothing but my respect for the lady who bears your name.

(Morse *enters, closing the door behind him carefully.*)

Aubrey. What is it?

Morse (*hesitatingly*). May I speak to you, sir? (*In an undertone.*) Mrs. Jarman, sir.

Aubrey (*softly to* Morse). Mrs. Jarman! Do you mean she is at the lodge in her carriage?

Morse. No, sir — here. (Aubrey *looks towards* Drummle, *perplexed.*) There's a nice fire in your — in that room, sir.

(*Glancing in the direction of the door leading to the bedroom.*)

Aubrey (*between his teeth, angrily*). Very well.

(Morse *retires.*)

Drummle (*looking at his watch*). A quarter to eleven — horrible! (*Taking up his hat and coat.*) Must get to bed — up late every night this week. (Aubrey *assists* Drummle *with his coat.*) Thank you. Well, good-night, Aubrey. I feel I've been dooced serious, quite out of keeping with myself; pray overlook it.

Aubrey (*kindly*). Ah, Cayley!

Drummle (*putting on a neck-handkerchief*). And remember that, after all, I'm merely a spectator in life; nothing more than a man at a play, in fact; only, like the old-fashioned play goer, I love to see certain characters happy and comfortable at the finish. You understand?

Aubrey. I think I do.

DRUMMLE. Then, for as long as you can, old friend, will you — keep a stall for me?

AUBREY. Yes, Cayley.

DRUMMLE (*gayly*). Ah, ha! Good-night! (*Bustling to the door.*) Don't bother! I'll let myself out! Good-night! God bless yer!

(*He goes out;* AUBREY *follows him.* MORSE *enters by the other door, carrying some unopened letters, which after a little consideration he places on the mantelpiece against the clock.* AUBREY *returns.*)

AUBREY. Yes?

MORSE. You hadn't seen your letters that came by the nine o'clock post, sir; I've put 'em where they'll catch your eye by and by.

AUBREY. Thank you.

MORSE (*hesitatingly*). Gunter's cook and waiter have gone, sir. Would you prefer me to go to bed?

AUBREY (*frowning*). Certainly not.

MORSE. Very well, sir.

(*He goes out.*)

AUBREY (*opening the upper door*). Paula! Paula!

(PAULA *enters and throws her arms round his neck. She is a young woman of about twenty-seven: beautiful, fresh, innocent-looking. She is in superb evening dress.*)

PAULA. Dearest!

AUBREY. Why have you come here?

PAULA. Angry?

AUBREY. Yes — no. But it's eleven o'clock.

PAULA (*laughing*). I know.

AUBREY. What on earth will Morse think?

PAULA. Do you trouble yourself about what servants *think?*

AUBREY. Of course.

PAULA. Goose! They're only machines made to wait upon people — and to give evidence in the Divorce Court. (*Looking round.*) Oh, indeed! A snug little dinner!

AUBREY. Three men.

PAULA (*suspiciously*). Men?

AUBREY. Men.

PAULA (*penitently*). Ah! (*Sitting at the table.*) I'm so hungry.

AUBREY. Let me get you some game pie, or some —

PAULA. No, no, hungry for this. What beautiful fruit! I love fruit when it's expensive. (*He clears a space on the table, places a plate before her, and helps her to fruit.*) I haven't dined, Aubrey dear.

AUBREY. My poor girl! Why?

PAULA. In the first place, I forgot to order any dinner, and my cook, who has always loathed me, thought he'd pay me out before he departed.

AUBREY. The beast!

PAULA. That's precisely what I —

AUBREY. No, Paula!

PAULA. What I told my maid to call him. What next will you think of me?

AUBREY. Forgive me. You must be starved.

PAULA (*eating fruit*). *I* didn't care. As there was nothing to eat, I sat in my best frock, with my toes on the dining-room fender, and dreamt, oh, such a lovely dinner party.

AUBREY. Dear lonely little woman!

PAULA. It was perfect. I saw you at the end of a very long table, opposite me, and we exchanged sly glances now and again over the flowers. We were host and hostess, Aubrey, and had been married about five years.

AUBREY (*kissing her hand*). Five years.

PAULA. And on each side of us was the nicest set imaginable — you know, dearest, the sort of men and women that can't be imitated.

AUBREY. Yes, yes. Eat some more fruit.

PAULA. But I haven't told you the best part of my dream.

AUBREY. Tell me.

PAULA. Well, although we had been married only such a few years, I seemed to know by the look on their faces that none of our guests had ever heard anything — anything — anything peculiar about the fascinating hostess.

AUBREY. That's just how it will be, Paula. The world moves so quickly. That's just how it will be.

Paula (*with a little grimace*). I wonder! (*Glancing at the fire*). Ugh! Do throw another log on.

Aubrey (*mending the fire*). There. But you mustn't be here long.

Paula. Hospitable wretch! I've something important to tell you. No, stay where you are. (*Turning from him, her face averted.*) Look here, that was my dream, Aubrey; but the fire went out while I was dozing, and I woke up with a regular fit of the shivers. And the result of it all was that I ran upstairs and scribbled you a letter.

Aubrey. Dear baby!

Paula. Remain where you are. (*Taking a letter from her pocket.*) This is it. I've given you an account of myself, furnished you with a list of my adventures since I — you know. (*Weighing the letter in her hand.*) I wonder if it would go for a penny. Most of it you're acquainted with; *I've* told you a good deal, haven't I?

Aubrey. Oh, Paula!

Paula. What I haven't told you I dare say you've heard from others. But in case they've omitted anything — the dears — it's all here.

Aubrey. In Heaven's name, why must you talk like this to-night?

Paula. It may save discussion by and by, don't you think? (*Holding out the letter.*) There you are.

Aubrey. No, dear, no.

Paula. Take it. (*He takes the letter.*) Read it through after I've gone, and then — read it again, and turn the matter over in your mind finally. And if, even at the very last moment, you feel you — oughtn't to go to church with me, send a messenger to Pont Street, any time before eleven to-morrow, telling me that you're afraid, and I — I'll take the blow.

Aubrey. Why, what — what do you think I am?

Paula. That's it. It's because I know you're such a dear good fellow that I want to save you the chance of ever feeling sorry you married me. I really love you so much, Aubrey, that to save you that, I'd rather you treated me as — as the others have done.

Aubrey (*turning from her with a cry*). Oh!

Paula (*after a slight pause*). I suppose I've shocked you. I can't help it if I have.

(*She sits, with assumed languor and indifference. He turns to her, advances, and kneels by her.*)

Aubrey. My dearest, you don't understand me. I — I can't bear to hear you always talking about — what's done with. I tell you I'll never remember it; Paula, can't you dismiss it? Try. Darling, if we promise each other to forget, to forget, we're bound to be happy. After all, it's a mechanical matter; the moment a wretched thought enters your head, you quickly think of something bright — it depends on one's will. Shall I burn this, dear? (*Referring to the letter he holds in his hand.*) Let me, let me!

Paula (*with a shrug of the shoulders*). I don't suppose there's much that's new to you in it, — just as you like.

(*He goes to the fire and burns the letter.*)

Aubrey. There's an end of it. (*Returning to her.*) What's the matter?

Paula (*rising coldly*). Oh, nothing! I'll go and put my cloak on.

Aubrey (*detaining her*). What *is* the matter?

Paula. Well, I think you might have said, "You're very generous, Paula," or at least, "Thank you, dear," when I offered to set you free.

Aubrey (*catching her in his arms*). Ah!

Paula. Ah! ah! Ha! ha! It's all very well, but you don't know what it cost me to make such an offer. I do so want to be married.

Aubrey. But you never imagined — ?

Paula. Perhaps not. And yet I *did* think of what I'd do at the end of our acquaintance if you had preferred to behave like the rest. (*Taking a flower from her bodice.*)

Aubrey. Hush!

Paula. Oh, I forgot!

Aubrey. What would you have done when we parted?

Paula. Why, killed myself.

Aubrey. Paula, dear!

Paula. It's true. (*Putting the flower in his buttonhole.*) Do you know, I feel certain I should make away with myself if anything serious happened to me.

Aubrey. Anything serious! What, has nothing ever been serious to you, Paula?

Paula. Not lately; not since a long while ago. I made up my mind then to have done with taking things seriously. If I hadn't, I — However, we won't talk about that.

Aubrey. But now, now, life will be different to you, won't it — quite different? Eh, dear?

Paula. Oh, yes, now. Only, Aubrey, mind you keep me always happy.

Aubrey. I will try to.

Paula. I know I couldn't swallow a second big dose of misery. I know that if ever I felt wretched again — truly wretched — I should take a leaf out of Connie Tirlemont's book. You remember? They found her —

(*With a look of horror.*)

Aubrey. For God's sake, don't let your thoughts run on such things!

Paula (*laughing*). Ha, ha, how scared you look! There, think of the time! Dearest, what will my coachman say? My cloak!

(*She runs off, gayly, by the upper door.* Aubrey *looks after her for a moment, then he walks up to the fire and stands warming his feet at the bars. As he does so he raises his head and observes the letters upon the mantelpiece. He takes one down quickly.*)

Aubrey. Ah! Ellean! (*Opening the letter and reading.*) "My dear father, — A great change has come over me. I believe my mother in Heaven has spoken to me, and counseled me to turn to you in your loneliness. At any rate, your words have reached my heart, and I no longer feel fitted for this solemn life. I am ready to take my place by you. Dear father, will you receive me? — Ellean."

(Paula *reënters, dressed in a handsome cloak. He stares at her as if he hardly realized her presence.*)

Paula. What are you staring at? Don't you admire my cloak?

Aubrey. Yes.

Paula. Couldn't you wait till I'd gone before reading your letters?

Aubrey (*putting the letter away*). I beg your pardon.

Paula. Take me downstairs to the carriage. (*Slipping her arm through his.*) How I tease you! To-morrow! I'm so happy! (*They go out.*)

THE SECOND ACT

A morning-room in Aubrey Tanqueray's *house, "Highercoombe," near Willowmere, Surrey — a bright and prettily furnished apartment of irregular shape, with double doors opening into a small hall at the back, another door on the left, and a large recessed window through which is obtained a view of extensive grounds. Everything about the room is charming and graceful. The fire is burning in the grate, and a small table is tastefully laid for breakfast. It is a morning in early spring, and the sun is streaming in through the window.*

Aubrey *and* Paula *are seated at breakfast, and* Aubrey *is silently reading his letters. Two servants, a man and a woman, hand dishes and then retire. After a little while* Aubrey *puts his letters aside and looks across to the window.*

Aubrey. Sunshine! Spring!

Paula (*glancing at the clock*). Exactly six minutes.

Aubrey. Six minutes?

Paula. Six minutes, Aubrey dear, since you made your last remark.

Aubrey. I beg your pardon: I was reading my letters. Have you seen Ellean this morning?

Paula (*coldly*). Your last observation but one was about Ellean.

Aubrey. Dearest, what shall I talk about?

Paula. Ellean breakfasted two hours ago, Morgan tells me, and then went out walking with her dog.

Aubrey. She wraps up warmly, I hope; this sunshine is deceptive.

Paula. I ran about the lawn last night, after dinner, in satin shoes. Were you anxious about me?

Aubrey. Certainly.

Paula (*melting*). Really.

Aubrey. You make me wretchedly anxious; you delight in doing incautious things. You are incurable.

Paula. Ah, what a beast I am! (*Going to him and kissing him, then glancing at the letters by his side.*) A letter from Cayley?

Aubrey. He is staying very near here, with Mrs. —— Very near here.

Paula. With the lady whose chimneys we have the honor of contemplating from our windows?

Aubrey. With Mrs. Cortelyon — Yes.

Paula. Mrs. Cortelyon! The woman who might have set the example of calling on me when we first threw out roots in this deadly-lively soil! Deuce take Mrs. Cortelyon!

Aubrey. Hush! my dear girl!

Paula (*returning to her seat*). Oh, I know she's an old acquaintance of yours — and of the first Mrs. Tanqueray. And she joins the rest of 'em in slapping the second Mrs. Tanqueray in the face. However, I have my revenge — she's six-and-forty, and I wish nothing worse to happen to any woman.

Aubrey. Well, she's going to town, Cayley says here, and his visit's at an end. He's coming over this morning to call on you. Shall we ask him to transfer himself to us? Do say yes.

Paula. Yes.

Aubrey (*gladly*). Ah, ha! old Cayley.

Paula (*coldly*). He'll amuse *you*.

Aubrey. And you too.

Paula. Because you find a companion, shall I be boisterously hilarious?

Aubrey. Come, come! He talks London, and you know you like that.

Paula. London! London or Heaven! which is farther from me!

Aubrey. Paula!

Paula. Oh! Oh, I am so bored, Aubrey!

Aubrey (*gathering up his letters and going to her, leaning over her shoulder*). Baby, what can I do for you?

Paula. I suppose, nothing. You have done all you can for me.

Aubrey. What do you mean?

Paula. You have married me.

(*He walks away from her thoughtfully, to the writing table. As he places his letters on the table he sees an addressed letter, stamped for the post, lying on the blotting-book; he picks it up.*)

Aubrey (*in an altered tone*). You've been writing this morning before breakfast?

Paula (*looking at him quickly, then away again*). Er — that letter.

Aubrey (*with the letter in his hand*). To Lady Orreyed. Why?

Paula. Why not? Mabel's an old friend of mine.

Aubrey. Are you — corresponding?

Paula. I heard from her yesterday. They've just returned from the Riviera. She seems happy.

Aubrey (*sarcastically*). That's good news.

Paula. Why are you always so cutting about Mabel? She's a kind-hearted girl. Everything's altered; she even thinks of letting her hair go back to brown. She's Lady Orreyed. She's married to George. What's the matter with her?

Aubrey (*turning away*). Oh!

Paula. You drive me mad sometimes with the tone you take about things! Great goodness, if you come to that, George Orreyed's wife isn't a bit worse than yours! (*He faces her suddenly.*) I suppose I needn't have made that observation.

Aubrey. No, there was scarcely a necessity.

(*He throws the letter on to the table, and takes up the newspaper.*)

Paula. I am very sorry.

Aubrey. All right, dear.

Paula (*trifling with the letter*). I — I'd better tell you what I've written. I meant to do so, of course. I — I've asked the Orreyeds to come and stay with us. (*He looks at her, and lets the paper fall to the ground in a helpless way.*) George was a great friend of Cayley's; I'm sure *he* would be delighted to meet them here.

Aubrey (*laughing mirthlessly*). Ha, ha, ha! They say Orreyed has taken to tippling at dinner. Heavens above!

PAULA. Oh! I've no patience with you! You'll kill me with this life! (*She selects some flowers from a vase on the table, cuts and arranges them, and fastens them in her bodice.*) What is my existence, Sunday to Saturday? In the morning, a drive down to the village, with the groom, to give my orders to the tradespeople. At lunch, you and Ellean. In the afternoon, a novel, the newspapers; if fine, another drive — *if* fine! Tea — you and Ellean. Then two hours of dusk; then dinner — you and Ellean. Then a game of Bésique, you and I, while Ellean reads a religious book in a dull corner. Then a yawn from me, another from you, a sigh from Ellean; three figures suddenly rise — "Good-night, good-night, good-night!" (*Imitating a kiss.*) "God bless you!" Ah!

AUBREY. Yes, yes, Paula — yes, dearest — that's what it is *now*. But by and by, if people begin to come round us —

PAULA. Hah! That's where we've made the mistake, my friend Aubrey! (*Pointing to the window.*) Do you believe these people will *ever* come round us? Your former crony, Mrs. Cortelyon? Or the grim old vicar, or that wife of his whose huge nose is positively indecent? Or the Ullathornes, or the Gollans, or Lady William Petres? I know better! And when the young ones gradually take the place of the old, there will still remain the sacred tradition that the dreadful person who lives at the top of the hill is never, under any circumstances, to be called upon! And so we shall go on here, year in and year out, until the sap is run out of our lives, and we're stale and dry and withered from sheer, solitary respectability. Upon my word, I wonder we didn't see that we should have been far happier if we'd gone in for the devil-may-care, café-living sort of life in town! After all, *I* have a set, and you might have joined it. It's true, I did want, dearly, dearly, to be a married woman, but where's the pride in being a married woman among married women who are — married! If — (*Seeing that* AUBREY's *head has sunk into his hands.*) Aubrey! My dear boy! You're not — crying?

(*He looks up, with a flushed face.* ELLEAN *enters, dressed very simply for walking. She is a low-voiced, grave girl of about nineteen, with a face somewhat resembling a Madonna. Towards* PAULA *her manner is cold and distant.*)

AUBREY (*in an undertone*). Ellean!

ELLEAN. Good-morning, papa. Good-morning, Paula.

(PAULA *puts her arms round* ELLEAN *and kisses her.* ELLEAN *makes little response.*)

PAULA. Good-morning. (*Brightly.*) We've been breakfasting this side of the house, to get the sun.

(*She sits at the piano and rattles at a gay melody. Seeing that* PAULA's *back is turned to them,* ELLEAN *goes to* AUBREY *and kisses him; he returns the kiss almost furtively. As they separate, the servants reënter, and proceed to carry out the breakfast table.*)

AUBREY (*to* ELLEAN). I guess where you've been: there's some gorse clinging to your frock.

ELLEAN (*removing a sprig of gorse from her skirt*). Rover and I walked nearly as far as Black Moor. The poor fellow has a thorn in his pad; I am going upstairs for my tweezers.

AUBREY. Ellean! (*She returns to him.*) Paula is a little depressed — out of sorts. She complains that she has no companion.

ELLEAN. I am with Paula nearly all the day, papa.

AUBREY. Ah, but you're such a little mouse. Paula likes cheerful people about her.

ELLEAN. I'm afraid I am naturally rather silent; and it's so difficult to seem to be what one is not.

AUBREY. I don't wish that, Ellean.

ELLEAN. I will offer to go down to the village with Paula this morning — shall I?

AUBREY (*touching her hand gently*). Thank you — do.

ELLEAN. When I've looked after Rover, I'll come back to her.

(*She goes out;* PAULA *ceases play-*

ing, and turns on the music-stool, looking at Aubrey.)

Paula. Well, have you and Ellean had your little confidence?

Aubrey. Confidence?

Paula. Do you think I couldn't feel it, like a pain between my shoulders?

Aubrey. Ellean is coming back in a few minutes to be with you. (*Bending over her.*) Paula, Paula dear, is this how you keep your promise?

Paula. Oh! (*Rising impatiently, and crossing swiftly to the settee, where she sits; moving restlessly.*) I *can't* keep my promise; I *am* jealous; it won't be smothered. I see you looking at her, watching her; your voice drops when you speak to her. I know how fond you are of that girl, Aubrey.

Aubrey. What would you have? I've no other home for her. She is my daughter.

Paula. She is your saint. Saint Ellean!

Aubrey. You have often told me how good and sweet you think her.

Paula. Good! — Yes! Do you imagine *that* makes me less jealous? (*Going to him and clinging to his arm.*) Aubrey, there are two sorts of affection — the love for a woman you respect, and the love for the woman you — love. She gets the first from you: I never can.

Aubrey. Hush, hush! you don't realize what you say.

Paula. If Ellean cared for me only a little, it would be different. I shouldn't be jealous then. Why doesn't she care for me?

Aubrey. She — she — she will, in time.

Paula. You can't say that without stuttering.

Aubrey. Her disposition seems a little unresponsive; she resembles her mother in many ways; I can see it every day.

Paula. She's marble. It's a shame. There's not the slightest excuse; for all she knows, I'm as much a saint as she — only married. Dearest, help me to win her over!

Aubrey. Help you?

Paula. You can. Teach her that it is her duty to love me; she hangs on to every word you speak. I'm sure, Aubrey, that the love of a nice woman who believed me to be like herself would do me a world of good. You'd get the benefit of it as well as I. It would soothe me; it would make me less horribly restless; it would take this — this — mischievous feeling from me. (*Coaxingly.*) Aubrey!

Aubrey. Have patience; everything will come right.

Paula. Yes, if you help me.

Aubrey. In the meantime you will tear up your letter to Lady Orreyed, won't you?

Paula (*kissing his hand*). Of course I will — anything!

Aubrey. Ah, thank you, dearest! (*Laughing.*) Why, good gracious! — ha, ha! — just imagine "Saint Ellean" and that woman side by side!

Paula (*going back with a cry*). Ah!

Aubrey. What?

Paula (*passionately*). It's Ellean you're considering, not me! It's all Ellean with you! Ellean! Ellean!

(Ellean *reënters.*)

Ellean. Did you call me, Paula? (*Clenching his hands,* Aubrey *turns away and goes out.*) Is papa angry?

Paula. I drive him distracted, sometimes. There, I confess it!

Ellean. Do you? Oh, why do you!

Paula. Because I — because I'm jealous.

Ellean. Jealous?

Paula. Yes — of you. (Ellean *is silent.*) Well, what do you think of that?

Ellean. I knew it; I've seen it. It hurts me dreadfully. What do you wish me to do? Go away?

Paula. Leave us! (*Beckoning her with a motion of the head.*) Look here! (Ellean *goes to* Paula *slowly and unresponsively.*) You could cure me of my jealousy very easily. Why don't you — like me?

Ellean. What do you mean by — like you? I don't understand.

Paula. Love me.

Ellean. Love is not a feeling that is under one's control. I shall alter as time goes on, perhaps. I didn't begin to love my father deeply till a few months ago, and then I obeyed my mother.

Paula. Ah, yes, you dream things, don't

you — see them in your sleep? You fancy your mother speaks to you?

Ellean. When you have lost your mother it is a comfort to believe that she is dead only to this life, that she still watches over her child. I do believe that of my mother.

Paula. Well, and so you haven't been bidden to love *me?*

Ellean (*after a pause, almost inaudibly*). No.

Paula. Dreams are only a hash-up of one's day-thoughts, I suppose you know. Think intently of anything, and it's bound to come back to you at night. I don't cultivate dreams myself.

Ellean. Ah, I knew you would only sneer!

Paula. I'm not sneering; I'm speaking the truth. I say that if you cared for me in the daytime I should soon make friends with those nightmares of yours. Ellean, why don't you try to look on me as your second mother? Of course there are not many years between us, but I'm ever so much older than you — in experience. I shall have no children of my own, I know that; it would be a real comfort to me if you would make me feel we belonged to each other. Won't you? Perhaps you think I'm odd — not nice. Well, the fact is I've two sides to my nature, and I've let the one almost smother the other. A few years ago I went through some trouble, and since then I haven't shed a tear. I believe if you put your arms around me just once I should run upstairs and have a good cry. There, I've talked to you as I've never talked to a woman in my life. Ellean, you seem to fear me. Don't! Kiss me!

(*With a cry, almost of despair,* Ellean *turns from* Paula *and sinks on to the settee, covering her face with her hands.*)

Paula (*indignantly*). Oh! Why is it! How dare you treat me like this? What do you mean by it? What do you mean?

(*A Servant enters.*)

Servant. Mr. Drummle, ma'am.

(Cayley Drummle, *in riding-dress, enters briskly. The Servant retires.*)

Paula (*recovering herself*). Well, Cayley!

Drummle (*shaking hands with her cordially*). How are you? (*Shaking hands with* Ellean, *who rises.*) I saw you in the distance an hour ago, in the gorse near Stapleton's.

Ellean. I didn't see you, Mr. Drummle.

Drummle. My dear Ellean, it is my experience that no charming young lady of nineteen ever does see a man of forty-five. (*Laughing*). Ha, ha!

Ellean (*going to the door*). Paula, papa wishes me to drive down to the village with you this morning. Do you care to take me?

Paula (*coldly*). Oh, by all means. Pray tell Watts to balance the cart for three.

(Ellean *goes out.*)

Drummle. How's Aubrey?

Paula. Very well — when Ellean's about the house.

Drummle. And you? I needn't ask.

Paula (*walking away to the window*). Oh, a dog's life, my dear Cayley, mine.

Drummle. Eh?

Paula. Doesn't that define a happy marriage? I'm sleek, well-kept, well-fed, never without a bone to gnaw and fresh straw to lie upon. (*Gazing out of the window.*) Oh, dear me!

Drummle. H'm! Well, I heartily congratulate you on your kennel. The view from the terrace here is superb.

Paula. Yes; I can see London.

Drummle. London! Not quite so far, surely?

Paula. *I* can. Also the Mediterranean, on a fine day. I wonder what Algiers looks like this morning from the sea! (*Impulsively.*) Oh, Cayley, do you remember those jolly times on board Peter Jarman's yacht when we lay off —? (*Stopping suddenly, seeing* Drummle *staring at her.*) Good gracious! What are we talking about!

(Aubrey *enters.*)

Aubrey. (*To* Drummle.) Dear old chap! Has Paula asked you?

Paula. Not yet.

Aubrey. We want you to come to us, now that you're leaving Mrs. Cortelyon — at once, to-day. Stay a month, as long as you please — eh, Paula?

Paula. As long as you can possibly endure it — do, Cayley.

Drummle (*looking at* Aubrey). Delighted. (*To* Paula.) Charming of you to have me.

Paula. My dear man, you're a blessing. I must telegraph to London for more fish! A strange appetite to cater for! Something to do, to do, to do!

(*She goes out in a mood of almost childish delight.*)

Drummle (*eyeing* Aubrey). Well?

Aubrey (*with a wearied, anxious look*). Well, Cayley?

Drummle. How are you getting on?

Aubrey. My position doesn't grow less difficult. I told you, when I met you last week, of this feverish, jealous attachment of Paula's for Ellean?

Drummle. Yes. I hardly know why, but I came to the conclusion that you don't consider it an altogether fortunate attachment.

Aubrey. Ellean doesn't respond to it.

Drummle. These are early days. Ellean will warm towards your wife by and by.

Aubrey. Ah, but there's the question. Cayley!

Drummle. What question?

Aubrey. The question which positively distracts me. Ellean is so different from — most women; I don't believe a purer creature exists out of heaven. And I — I ask myself, am I doing right in exposing her to the influence of poor Paula's light, careless nature?

Drummle. My dear Aubrey!

Aubrey. That shocks you! So it does me. I assure you I long to urge my girl to break down the reserve which keeps her apart from Paula, but somehow I can't do it — well, I don't do it. How can I make you understand? But when you come to us you'll understand quickly enough. Cayley, there's hardly a subject you can broach on which poor Paula hasn't some strange, out-of-the-way thought to give utterance to; some curious, warped notion. They are not mere worldly thoughts — unless, good God! they belong to the little hellish world which our blackguardism has created: no, her ideas have too little calculation in them to be called worldly. But it makes it the more dreadful that such thoughts should be ready, spontaneous; that expressing them has become a perfectly natural process; that her words, acts even, have almost lost their proper significance for her, and seem beyond her control. Ah, and the pain of listening to it all from the woman one loves, the woman one hoped to make happy and contented, who is really and truly a good woman, as it were, maimed! Well, this is my burden, and I shouldn't speak to you of it but for my anxiety about Ellean. Ellean! What is to be her future? It is in my hands; what am I to do? Cayley, when I remember how Ellean comes to me, from another world I always think, — when I realize the charge that's laid on me, I find myself wishing, in a sort of terror, that my child were safe under the ground!

Drummle. My dear Aubrey, aren't you making a mistake?

Aubrey. Very likely. What is it?

Drummle. A mistake, not in regarding your Ellean as an angel, but in believing that, under any circumstances, it would be possible for her to go through life without getting her white robe — shall we say, a little dusty at the hem? Don't take me for a cynic. I am sure there are many women upon earth who are almost divinely innocent; but being on earth, they must send their robes to the laundry occasionally. Ah, and it's right that they should have to do so, for what can they learn from the checking of their little washing-bills but lessons of charity? Now I see but two courses open to you for the disposal of your angel.

Aubrey. Yes?

Drummle. You must either restrict her to a paradise which is, like every earthly paradise, necessarily somewhat imperfect, or treat her as an ordinary flesh-and-blood young woman, and give her the advantages of that society to which she properly belongs.

Aubrey. Advantages?

Drummle. My dear Aubrey, of all forms of innocence mere ignorance is the least admirable. Take my advice, let her walk and talk and suffer and be healed with the great crowd. Do it, and hope that she'll some day meet a good, honest fellow who'll make her life complete, happy, secure. Now you see what I'm driving at.

Aubrey. A sanguine programme, my dear Cayley! Oh, I'm not pooh-poohing it. Putting sentiment aside, of course I know that a fortunate marriage for Ellean would be the best — perhaps the only — solution of my difficulty. But you forget the danger of the course you suggest.

Drummle. Danger?

Aubrey. If Ellean goes among men and women, how can she escape from learning, sooner or later, the history of — poor Paula's — old life?

Drummle. H'm! You remember the episode of the Jeweler's Son in the Arabian Nights? Of course you don't. Well, if your daughter lives, she *can't* escape — what you're afraid of. (Aubrey *gives a half-stifled exclamation of pain.*) And when she does hear the story, surely it would be better that she should have some knowledge of the world to help her to understand it.

Aubrey. To understand!

Drummle. To understand, to — philosophize.

Aubrey. To philosophize?

Drummle. Philosophy is toleration, and it is only one step from toleration to forgiveness.

Aubrey. You're right, Cayley; I believe you always are. Yes, yes. But, even if I had the courage to attempt to solve the problem of Ellean's future in this way, I — I'm helpless.

Drummle. How?

Aubrey. What means have I now of placing my daughter in the world I've left?

Drummle. Oh, some friend — some woman friend.

Aubrey. I have none; they're gone.

Drummle. You're wrong there; I know one —

Aubrey (*listening*). That's Paula's cart. Let's discuss this again.

Drummle (*going up to the window and looking out*). It isn't the dog-cart. (*Turning to* Aubrey.) I hope you'll forgive me, old chap.

Aubrey. What for?

Drummle. Whose wheels do you think have been cutting ruts in your immaculate drive?

(*A Servant enters.*)

Servant (*to* Aubrey). Mrs. Cortelyon, sir.

Aubrey. Mrs. Cortelyon! (*After a short pause.*) Very well. (*The Servant withdraws.*) What on earth is the meaning of this?

Drummle. Ahem! While I've been our old friend's guest, Aubrey, we have very naturally talked a good deal about you and yours.

Aubrey. Indeed, have you?

Drummle. Yes; and Alice Cortelyon has arrived at the conclusion that it would have been far kinder had she called on Mrs. Tanqueray long ago. She's going abroad for Easter before settling down in London for the season, and I believe she has come over this morning to ask for Ellean's companionship.

Aubrey. Oh, I see! (*Frowning.*) Quite a friendly little conspiracy, my dear Cayley!

Drummle. Conspiracy! Not at all, I assure you. (*Laughing.*) Ha, ha!

(Ellean *enters from the hall with* Mrs. Cortelyon, *a handsome, good-humored, spirited woman of about forty-five.*)

Ellean. Papa —

Mrs. Cortelyon. (*To* Aubrey, *shaking hands with him heartily.*) Well, Aubrey, how are you? I've just been telling this great girl of yours that I knew her when she was a sad-faced, pale baby. How is Mrs. Tanqueray? I have been a bad neighbor, and I'm here to beg forgiveness. Is she indoors?

AUBREY. She's upstairs putting on a hat, I believe.

MRS. CORTELYON (*sitting comfortably*). Ah! (*She looks round:* DRUMMLE *and* ELLEAN *are talking together in the hall.*) We used to be very frank with each other, Aubrey. I suppose the old footing is no longer possible, eh?

AUBREY. If so, I'm not entirely to blame, Mrs. Cortelyon.

MRS. CORTELYON. Mrs. Cortelyon? H'm! No, I admit it. But you must make some little allowance for me, *Mr. Tanqueray.* Your first wife and I, as girls, were like two cherries on one stalk, and then I was the confidential friend of your married life. That post, perhaps, wasn't altogether a sinecure. And now — well, when a woman gets to my age I suppose she's a stupid, prejudiced, conventional creature. However, I've got over it and — (*giving him her hand*) — I hope you'll be enormously happy and let me be a friend once more.

AUBREY. Thank you, Alice.

MRS. CORTELYON. That's right. I feel more cheerful than I've done for weeks. But I suppose it would serve me right if the second Mrs. Tanqueray showed me the door. Do you think she will?

AUBREY (*listening*). Here is my wife. (MRS. CORTELYON *rises, and* PAULA *enters, dressed for driving; she stops abruptly on seeing* MRS. CORTELYON.) Paula, dear, Mrs. Cortelyon has called to see you.

(PAULA *starts, looks at* MRS. CORTELYON *irresolutely, then after a slight pause barely touches* MRS. CORTELYON'S *extended hand.*)

PAULA (*whose manner now alternates between deliberate insolence and assumed sweetness*). Mrs. ——? What name, Aubrey?

AUBREY. Mrs. Cortelyon.

PAULA. Cortelyon? Oh, yes, Cortelyon.

MRS. CORTELYON (*carefully guarding herself throughout against any expression of resentment*). Aubrey ought to have told you that Alice Cortelyon and he are very old friends.

PAULA. Oh, very likely he has mentioned the circumstance. I have quite a wretched memory.

MRS. CORTELYON. You know we are neighbors, Mrs. Tanqueray.

PAULA. Neighbors? Are we really? Won't you sit down? (*They both sit.*) Neighbors! That's most interesting!

MRS. CORTELYON. Very near neighbors. You can see my roof from your windows.

PAULA. I fancy I *have* observed a roof. But you have been away from home; you have only just returned.

MRS. CORTELYON. I? What makes you think that?

PAULA. Why, because it is two months since we came to Highercoombe, and I don't remember your having called.

MRS. CORTELYON. Your memory is now terribly accurate. No, I've not been away from home, and it is to explain my neglect that I am here, rather unceremoniously, this morning.

PAULA. Oh, to explain — quite so. (*With mock solicitude.*) Ah, you've been very ill; I ought to have seen that before.

MRS. CORTELYON. Ill!

PAULA. You look dreadfully pulled down. We poor women show illness so plainly in our faces, don't we?

AUBREY (*anxiously*). Paula dear, Mrs. Cortelyon is the picture of health.

MRS. CORTELYON (*with some asperity*). I have never *felt* better in my life.

PAULA (*looking around innocently*). Have I said anything awkward? Aubrey, tell Mrs. Cortelyon how stupid and thoughtless I always am!

MRS. CORTELYON (*to* DRUMMLE, *who is now standing close to her*). Really, Cayley —! (*He soothes her with a nod and smile and a motion of his finger to his lip.*) Mrs. Tanqueray, I am afraid my explanation will not be quite so satisfactory as either of those you have just helped me to. You may have heard — but, if you have heard, you have doubtless forgotten — that twenty years ago, when your husband first lived here, I was a constant visitor at Highercoombe.

PAULA. Twenty years ago — fancy! I was a naughty little child then.

MRS. CORTELYON. Possibly. Well, at

that time, and till the end of her life, my affections were centered upon the lady of this house.

Paula. Were they? That was very sweet of you.

(Ellean *approaches* Mrs. Cortelyon, *listening intently to her.*)

Mrs. Cortelyon. I will say no more on that score, but I must add this: when, two months ago you came here, I realized, perhaps for the first time, that I was a middle-aged woman, and that it had become impossible for me to accept without some effort a breaking-in upon many tender associations. There, Mrs. Tanqueray, that is my confession. Will you try to understand it and pardon me?

Paula (*watching* Ellean, — *sneeringly*). Ellean dear, you appear to be very interested in Mrs. Cortelyon's reminiscences; I don't think I can do better than make you my mouthpiece — there is such sympathy between us. What do you say — can we bring ourselves to forgive Mrs. Cortelyon for neglecting us for two weary months?

Mrs. Cortelyon (*to* Ellean, *pleasantly*). Well, Ellean? (*With a little cry of tenderness* Ellean *impulsively sits beside* Mrs. Cortelyon *and takes her hand.*) My dear child!

Paula (*in an undertone to* Aubrey). Ellean isn't so very slow in taking to Mrs. Cortelyon!

Mrs. Cortelyon. (*To* Paula *and* Aubrey.) Come, this encourages me to broach my scheme. Mrs. Tanqueray, it strikes me that you two good people are just now excellent company for each other, while Ellean would perhaps be glad of a little peep into the world you are anxious to avoid. Now, I'm going to Paris tomorrow for a week or two before settling down in Chester Square, so — don't gasp, both of you! — if this girl is willing, and you have made no other arrangements for her, will you let her come with me to Paris, and afterwards remain with me in town during the season? (Ellean *utters an exclamation of surprise.* Paula *is silent.*) What do you say?

Aubrey. Paula — Paula dear. (*Hesitatingly.*) My dear Mrs. Cortelyon, this is wonderfully kind of you; I am really at a loss to — eh, Cayley?

Drummle (*watching* Paula *apprehensively*). Kind! Now I must say I don't think so! I begged Alice to take *me* to Paris, and she declined! I am thrown over for Ellean! Ha! ha!

Mrs. Cortelyon (*laughing*). What nonsense you talk, Cayley!

(*The laughter dies out.* Paula *remains quite still.*)

Aubrey. Paula dear.

Paula (*slowly collecting herself*). One moment. I — I don't quite — (*To* Mrs. Cortelyon.) You propose that Ellean leaves Highercoombe almost at once, and remains with you some months?

Mrs. Cortelyon. It would be a mercy to me. You can afford to be generous to a desolate old widow. Come, Mrs. Tanqueray, won't you spare her?

Paula. Won't *I* spare her. (*Suspiciously.*) Have you mentioned your plan to Aubrey — before I came in?

Mrs. Cortelyon. No; I had no opportunity.

Paula. Nor to Ellean?

Mrs. Cortelyon. Oh, no.

Paula (*looking about her in suppressed excitement*). This hasn't been discussed at all, behind my back?

Mrs. Cortelyon. My dear Mrs. Tanqueray!

Paula. Ellean, let us hear your voice in the matter!

Ellean. I should like to go with Mrs. Cortelyon —

Paula. Ah!

Ellean. That is, if — if —

Paula. If — what?

Ellean (*looking towards* Aubrey, *appealingly*). Papa!

Paula (*in a hard voice*). Oh, of course — I forgot. (*To* Aubrey.) My dear Aubrey, it rests with you, naturally, whether I am — — to lose — Ellean.

Aubrey. Lose Ellean! (*Advancing to* Paula.) There is no question of losing Ellean. You would see Ellean in town constantly when she returned from Paris; isn't that so, Mrs. Cortelyon?

Mrs. Cortelyon. Certainly.

Paula (*laughing softly*). Oh, I didn't know I should be allowed that privilege.

Mrs. Cortelyon. Privilege, my dear Mrs. Tanqueray!

Paula. Ha, ha! that makes all the difference, doesn't it?

Aubrey (*with assumed gayety*). All the difference? I should think so! (*To* Ellean, *laying his hand upon her head tenderly.*) And you are quite certain you wish to see what the world is like on the other side of Black Moor!

Ellean. If you are willing, papa, I am quite certain.

Aubrey (*looking at* Paula *irresolutely, then speaking with an effort*). Then I — I am willing.

Paula (*rising and striking the table lightly with her clenched hand*). That decides it! (*There is a general movement. Excitedly to* Mrs. Cortelyon, *who advances towards her.*) When do you want her?

Mrs. Cortelyon. We go to town this afternoon at five o'clock, and sleep to-night at Bayliss's. There is barely time for her to make her preparations.

Paula. I will undertake that she is ready.

Mrs. Cortelyon. I've a great deal to scramble through at home too, as you may guess. Good-bye!

Paula (*turning away*). Mrs. Cortelyon is going.

(Paula *stands looking out of the window, with her back to those in the room.*)

Mrs. Cortelyon (*to* Drummle). Cayley —

Drummle (*to her*). Eh?

Mrs. Cortelyon. I've gone through it, for the sake of Aubrey and his child, but I — I feel a hundred. Is that a mad-woman?

Drummle. Of course; all jealous women are mad. (*He goes out with* Aubrey.)

Mrs. Cortelyon (*hesitatingly, to* Paula). Good-bye, Mrs. Tanqueray.

(Paula *inclines her head with the slightest possible movement, then resumes her former position.* Ellean *comes from the hall and takes* Mrs. Cortelyon *out of the room. After a brief silence,* Paula *turns with a fierce cry, and hurriedly takes off her coat and hat, and tosses them upon the settee.*)

Paula. Who's that? Oh! Oh! Oh!

(*She drops into the chair as* Aubrey *returns; he stands looking at her.*)

Aubrey. I — you have altered your mind about going out.

Paula. Yes. Please to ring the bell.

Aubrey (*touching the bell*). You are angry about Mrs. Cortelyon and Ellean. Let me try to explain my reasons —

Paula. Be careful what you say to me just now! I have never felt like this — except once — in my life. Be careful what you say to me!

(*A Servant enters.*)

Paula (*rising*). Is Watts at the door with the cart?

Servant. Yes, ma'am.

Paula. Tell him to drive down to the post-office directly with this.

(*Picking up the letter which has been lying upon the table.*)

Aubrey. With that?

Paula. Yes. My letter to Lady Orreyed.

(*Giving the letter to the Servant, who goes out.*)

Aubrey. Surely you don't wish me to countermand any order of yours to a servant. Call the man back — take the letter from him!

Paula. I have not the slightest intention of doing so.

Aubrey. I must, then. (*Going to the door. She snatches up her hat and coat and follows him.*) What are you going to do?

Paula. If you stop that letter, I walk out of the house.

(*He hesitates, then leaves the door.*)

Aubrey. I am right in believing that to be the letter inviting George Orreyed and his wife to stay here, am I not?

Paula. Oh, yes — quite right.

Aubrey. Let it go; I'll write to him by and by.

Paula (*facing him,*. You dare!

Aubrey. Hush, Paula!

Paula. Insult me again and, upon my word, I'll go straight out of the house!

Aubrey. Insult you?

Paula. Insult me! What else is it? My God! what else is it? What do you mean by taking Ellean from me?

Aubrey. Listen —!

Paula. Listen to *me!* And how do you take her? You pack her off in the care of a woman who has deliberately held aloof from me, who's thrown mud at me! Yet this Cortelyon creature has only to put foot here once to be entrusted with the charge of the girl you know I dearly want to keep near me!

Aubrey. Paula dear! hear me —!

Paula. Ah! of course, of course! I can't be so useful to your daughter as such people as this; and so I'm to be given the go-by for any town friend of yours who turns up and chooses to patronize us! Hah! Very well, at any rate, as you take Ellean from me you justify my looking for companions where I can most readily find 'em.

Aubrey. You wish me to fully appreciate your reason for sending that letter to Lady Orreyed?

Paula. Precisely — I do.

Aubrey. And could you, after all, go back to associates of that order? It's not possible!

Paula (*mockingly*). What, not after the refining influence of these intensely respectable surroundings? (*Going to the door.*) We'll see!

Aubrey. Paula!

Paula (*violently*). We'll see!

(*She goes out. He stands still looking after her.*)

THE THIRD ACT

The drawing-room at "Highercoombe." Facing the spectator are two large French windows, sheltered by a verandah, leading into the garden; on the right is a door opening into a small hall. The fireplace, with a large mirror above it, is on the left-hand side of the room, and higher up in the same wall are double doors recessed. The room is richly furnished, and everything betokens taste and luxury. The windows are open, and there is moonlight in the garden.

Lady Orreyed, *a pretty, affected doll of a woman, with a mincing voice and flaxen hair, is sitting on the ottoman, her head resting against the drum, and her eyes closed.* Paula, *looking pale, worn, and thoroughly unhappy, is sitting at a table. Both are in sumptuous dinner-gowns.*

Lady Orreyed (*opening her eyes*). Well, I never! I dropped off! (*Feeling her hair.*) Just fancy! Where are the men?

Paula (*icily*). Outside, smoking.

(*A Servant enters with coffee, which he hands to* Lady Orreyed. Sir George Orreyed *comes in by the window. He is a man of about thirty-five, with a low forehead, a receding chin, a vacuous expression, and an ominous redness about the nose.*)

Lady Orreyed (*taking coffee*). Here's Dodo.

Sir George. I say, the flies under the verandah make you swear. (*The Servant hands coffee to* Paula, *who declines it, then to* Sir George, *who takes a cup.*) Hi! wait a bit! (*He looks at the tray searchingly, then puts back his cup.*) Never mind. (*Quietly to* Lady Orreyed.) I say, they're dooced sparin' with their liqueur, ain't they?

(*The Servant goes out at window.*)

Paula (*to* Sir George). Won't you take coffee, George?

Sir George. No, thanks. It's gettin' near time for a whiskey and potass. (*Approaching* Paula, *regarding* Lady Orreyed *admiringly.*) I say, Birdie looks rippin' to-night, don't she?

Paula. Your wife?

Sir George. Yaas — Birdie.

Paula. Rippin'?

Sir George. Yaas.

Paula. Quite — quite rippin'.

(*He moves round to the settee.* Paula *watches him with distaste, then rises and walks away.* Sir George *falls asleep on the settee.*)

Lady Orreyed. Paula love, I fancied you and Aubrey were a little more friendly at dinner. You haven't made it up, have you?

PAULA. We? Oh, no. We speak before others, that's all.

LADY ORREYED. And how long do you intend to carry on this game, dear?

PAULA (*turning away impatiently*). I really can't tell you.

LADY ORREYED. Sit down, old girl; don't be so fidgety. (PAULA *sits on the upper seat of the ottoman, with her back to* LADY ORREYED.) Of course, it's my duty, as an old friend, to give you a good talking-to — (PAULA *glares at her suddenly and fiercely*) — but really I've found one gets so many smacks in the face through interfering in matrimonial squabbles that I've determined to drop it.

PAULA. I think you're wise.

LADY ORREYED. However, I must say that I do wish you'd look at marriage in a more solemn light — just as I do, in fact. It is such a beautiful thing — marriage, and if people in our position don't respect it, and set a good example by living happily with their husbands, what can you expect from the middle classes? When did this sad state of affairs between you and Aubrey actually begin?

PAULA. Actually, a fortnight and three days ago; I haven't calculated the minutes.

LADY ORREYED. A day or two before Dodo and I turned up — arrived.

PAULA. Yes. One always remembers one thing by another; we left off speaking to each other the morning I wrote asking you to visit us.

LADY ORREYED. Lucky for you I was able to pop down, wasn't it, dear?

PAULA (*glaring at her again*). Most fortunate.

LADY ORREYED. A serious split with your husband without a pal on the premises — I should say, without a friend in the house — would be most unpleasant.

PAULA (*turning to her abruptly*). This place must be horribly doleful for you and George just now. At least you ought to consider him before me. Why didn't you leave me to my difficulties?

LADY ORREYED. Oh, we're quite comfortable, dear, thank you — both of us. George and me are so wrapped up in each other, it doesn't matter where we are. I don't want to crow over you, old girl, but I've got a perfect husband.

(SIR GEORGE *is now fast asleep, his head thrown back and his mouth open, looking hideous.*)

PAULA (*glancing at* SIR GEORGE). So you've given me to understand.

LADY ORREYED. Not that we don't have our little differences. Why, we fell out only this very morning. You remember the diamond and ruby tiara Charley Prestwick gave poor dear Connie Tirlemont years ago, don't you?

PAULA. No, I do not.

LADY ORREYED. No? Well, it's in the market. Benjamin of Piccadilly has got it in his shop window, and I've set my heart on it.

PAULA. You consider it quite necessary?

LADY ORREYED. Yes; because what I say to Dodo is this — a lady of my station must smother herself with hair ornaments. It's different with you, love — people don't look for so much blaze from you, but I've got rank to keep up; haven't I?

PAULA. Yes.

LADY ORREYED. Well, that was the cause of the little set-to between I and Dodo this morning. He broke two chairs, he was in such a rage. I forgot they're your chairs; do you mind?

PAULA. No.

LADY ORREYED. You know, poor Dodo can't lose his temper without smashing something; if it isn't a chair, it's a mirror; if it isn't that, it's china — a bit of Dresden for choice. Dear old pet! he loves a bit of Dresden when he's furious. He doesn't really throw things *at* me, dear; he simply lifts them up and drops them, like a gentleman. I expect our room upstairs will look rather wrecky before I get that tiara.

PAULA. Excuse the suggestion; perhaps your husband can't afford it.

LADY ORREYED. Oh, how dreadfully changed you are, Paula! Dodo can always mortgage something, or borrow of his ma. What *is* coming to you!

Paula. Ah!

(*She sits at the piano and touches the keys.*)

Lady Orreyed. Oh, yes, do play! That's the one thing I envy you for.

Paula. What shall I play?

Lady Orreyed. What was that heavenly piece you gave us last night, dear?

Paula. A bit of Schubert. Would you like to hear it again?

Lady Orreyed. You don't know any comic songs, do you?

Paula. I'm afraid not.

Lady Orreyed. I leave it to you.

(Paula *plays.* Aubrey *and* Cayley Drummle *appear outside the window; they look into the room.*)

Aubrey (*to* Drummle). You can see her face in that mirror. Poor girl, how ill and wretched she looks.

Drummle. When are the Orreyeds going?

Aubrey (*entering the room*). Heaven knows!

Drummle (*following* Aubrey). But *you're* entertaining them; what's it to do with heaven?

Aubrey. Do you know, Cayley, that even the Orreyeds serve a useful purpose? My wife actually speaks to me before our guests — think of that! I've come to rejoice at the presence of the Orreyeds!

Drummle. I dare say; we're taught that beetles are sent for a benign end.

Aubrey. Cayley, talk to Paula again to-night.

Drummle. Certainly, if I get the chance.

Aubrey. Let's contrive it. George is asleep; perhaps I can get that doll out of the way. (*As they advance into the room,* Paula *abruptly ceases playing and finds interest in a volume of music.* Sir George *is now nodding and snoring apoplectically.*) Lady Orreyed, whenever you feel inclined for a game of billiards I'm at your service.

Lady Orreyed (*jumping up*). Charmed, I'm sure! I really thought you had forgotten poor little me. Oh, look at Dodo!

Aubrey. No, no, don't wake him; he's tired.

Lady Orreyed. I must, he looks so plain. (*Rousing* Sir George.) Dodo! Dodo!

Sir George (*stupidly*). 'Ullo!

Lady Orreyed. Dodo dear, you were snoring.

Sir George. Oh, I say, you could 'a' told me that by and by.

Aubrey. You want a cigar, George; come into the billiard-room. (*Giving his arm to* Lady Orreyed.) Cayley, bring Paula.

(Aubrey *and* Lady Orreyed *go out.*)

Sir George (*rising*). Hey, what! Billiard-room! (*Looking at his watch.*) How goes the —? Phew! 'Ullo, 'Ullo! Whiskey and potass!

(*He goes rapidly after* Aubrey *and* Lady Orreyed. Paula *resumes playing.*)

Paula (*after a pause*). Don't moon about after me, Cayley; follow the others.

Drummle. Thanks, by and by. (*Sitting.*) That's pretty.

Paula (*after another pause, still playing*). I wish you wouldn't stare so.

Drummle. Was I staring? I'm sorry. (*She plays a little longer, then stops suddenly, rises, and goes to the window, where she stands looking out.* Drummle *moves from the ottoman to the settee.*) A lovely night.

Paula (*startled*). Oh! (*Without turning to him.*) Why do you hop about like a monkey?

Drummle. Hot rooms play the deuce with the nerves. Now, it would have done you good to have walked in the garden with us after dinner and made merry. Why didn't you?

Paula. You know why.

Drummle. Ah, you're thinking of the — difference between you and Aubrey?

Paula. Yes, I *am* thinking of it.

Drummle. Well, so am I. How long —?

Paula. Getting on for three weeks.

Drummle. Bless me, it must be! And this would have been such a night to have healed it! Moonlight, the stars, the scent of flowers; and yet enough darkness to enable a kind woman to rest her hand for an instant on the arm of a good fellow who loves her. Ah, ha! It's a wonderful power, dear Mrs. Aubrey, the power of an offended woman! Only realize it! Just that one touch — the mere tips of her fingers — and, for herself and another, she changes the color of the whole world.

PAULA (*turning to him calmly*). Cayley, my dear man, you talk exactly like a very romantic old lady.

(*She leaves the window and sits playing with the knick-knacks on the table.*)

DRUMMLE (*to himself*). H'm, that hasn't done it! Well — ha, ha! — I accept the suggestion. An old woman, eh?

PAULA. Oh, I didn't intend —

DRUMMLE. But why not? I've every qualification — well, almost. And I confess it would have given this withered bosom a throb of grandmotherly satisfaction if I could have seen you and Aubrey at peace before I take my leave to-morrow.

PAULA. To-morrow, Cayley!

DRUMMLE. I must.

PAULA. Oh, this house is becoming unendurable.

DRUMMLE. You're very kind. But you've got the Orreyeds.

PAULA (*fiercely*). The Orreyeds! I — I hate the Orreyeds! I lie awake at night, hating them!

DRUMMLE. Pardon me, I've understood that their visit is, in some degree, owing to — hem — your suggestion.

PAULA. Heavens! that doesn't make me like them better. Somehow or another, I — I've outgrown these people. This woman — I used to think her "jolly!" — sickens me. I can't breathe when she's near me: the whiff of her handkerchief turns me faint! And she patronizes me by the hour, until I — I feel my nails growing longer with every word she speaks!

DRUMMLE. My dear lady, why on earth don't you say all this to Aubrey?

PAULA. Oh, I've been such an utter fool, Cayley!

DRUMMLE (*soothingly*). Well, well, mention it to Aubrey!

PAULA. No, no, you don't understand. What do you think I've done?

DRUMMLE. Done! What, *since* you invited the Orreyeds?

PAULA. Yes; I must tell you —

DRUMMLE. Perhaps you'd better not.

PAULA. Look here! I've intercepted some letters from Mrs. Cortelyon and Ellean to — him. (*Producing three unopened letters from the bodice of her dress.*) There are the accursed things! From Paris — two from the Cortelyon woman, the other from Ellean!

DRUMMLE. But why — why?

PAULA. I don't know. Yes, I do! I saw letters coming from Ellean to her father; not a line to me — not a line. And one morning it happened I was downstairs before he was, and I spied this one lying with his heap on the breakfast table, and I slipped it into my pocket — out of malice, Cayley, pure deviltry! And a day or two afterwards I met Elwes the postman at the Lodge, and took the letters from him, and found these others amongst 'em. I felt simply fiendish when I saw them — fiendish! (*Returning the letters to her bodice.*) And now I carry them about with me, and they're scorching me like a mustard plaster!

DRUMMLE. Oh, this accounts for Aubrey not hearing from Paris lately!

PAULA. That's an ingenious conclusion to arrive at! Of course it does! (*With an hysterical laugh.*) Ha, ha!

DRUMMLE. Well, well! (*Laughing.*) Ha, ha, ha!

PAULA (*turning upon him*). I suppose it *is* amusing!

DRUMMLE. I beg pardon.

PAULA. Heaven knows I've little enough to brag about! I'm a bad lot, but not in mean tricks of this sort. In all my life this is the most caddish thing I've done. How am I to get rid of these letters — that's what I want to know? How am I to get rid of them?

DRUMMLE. If I were you I should take Aubrey aside and put them into his hands as soon as possible.

PAULA. What! and tell him to his face that I — ! No, thank you. I suppose *you* wouldn't like to —

DRUMMLE. No, no; I won't touch 'em!

PAULA. And you call yourself my friend?

DRUMMLE (*good-humoredly*). No, I don't!

Paula. Perhaps I'll tie them together and give them to his man in the morning.

Drummle. That won't avoid an explanation.

Paula (*recklessly*). Oh, then he must miss them —

Drummle. And trace them.

Paula (*throwing herself upon the ottoman*). I don't care!

Drummle. I know you don't; but let me send him to you now, may I?

Paula. Now! What do you think a woman's made of? I couldn't stand it, Cayley. I haven't slept for nights; and last night there was thunder, too! I believe I've got the horrors.

Drummle (*taking the little hand-mirror from the table*). You'll sleep well enough when you deliver those letters. Come, come, Mrs. Aubrey — a good night's rest! (*Holding the mirror before her face.*) It's quite time.

(*She looks at herself for a moment, then snatches the mirror from him.*)

Paula. You brute, Cayley, to show me that!

Drummle. Then — may I? Be guided by a fr— a poor old woman! May I?

Paula. You'll kill me, amongst you!

Drummle. What do you say?

Paula (*after a pause*). Very well. (*He nods his head and goes out rapidly. She looks after him for a moment, and calls "Cayley! Cayley!" Then she again produces the letters, deliberately, one by one, fingering them with aversion. Suddenly she starts, turning her head towards the door.*) Ah!

(Aubrey *enters quickly.*)

Aubrey. Paula!

Paula (*handing him the letters, her face averted*). There! (*He examines the letters, puzzled, and looks at her enquiringly.*) They are many days old. I stole them, I suppose to make you anxious and unhappy.

(*He looks at the letters again, then lays them aside on the table.*)

Aubrey (*gently*). Paula, dear, it doesn't matter.

Paula (*after a short pause*). Why — why do you take it like this?

Aubrey. What did you expect?

Paula. Oh, but I suppose silent reproaches are really the severest. And then, naturally, you are itching to open your letters. (*She crosses the room as if to go.*)

Aubrey. Paula! (*She pauses.*) Surely, surely, it's all over now?

Paula. All over! (*Mockingly.*) Has my step-daughter returned then? When did she arrive? I haven't heard of it!

Aubrey. You can be very cruel.

Paula. That word's always on a man's lips; he uses it if his soup's cold. (*With another movement as if to go.*) Need we —

Aubrey. I know I've wounded you, Paula. But isn't there any way out of this?

Paula. When does Ellean return? To-morrow? Next week?

Aubrey (*wearily*). Oh! Why should we grudge Ellean the little pleasure she is likely to find in Paris and in London?

Paula. I grudge her nothing, if that's a hit at me. But with that woman —?

Aubrey. It must be that woman or another. You know that at present we are unable to give Ellean the opportunity of — of —

Paula. Of mixing with respectable people.

Aubrey. The opportunity of gaining friends, experience, ordinary knowledge of the world. If you are interested in Ellean, can't you see how useful Mrs. Cortelyon's good offices are?

Paula. May I put one question? At the end of the London season, when Mrs. Cortelyon has done with Ellean, is it quite understood that the girl comes back to us? (Aubrey *is silent.*) Is it? Is it?

Aubrey. Let us wait till the end of the season —

Paula. Oh! I knew it. You're only fooling me; you put me off with any trash. I believe you've sent Ellean away, not for the reasons you give, but because you don't consider me a decent companion for her, because you're afraid she might get a little of her innocence rubbed off in my company? Come, isn't that the truth? Be honest! Isn't that it?

Aubrey. Yes.

(*There is a moment's silence, on both sides.*)

Paula (*with uplifted hands as if to strike him*). Oh!

Aubrey (*taking her by the wrists*). Sit down. Sit down. (*He puts her into a chair; she shakes herself free with a cry.*) Now listen to me. Fond as you are, Paula, of harking back to your past, there's one chapter of it you always let alone. I've never asked you to speak of it; you've never offered to speak of it. I mean the chapter that relates to the time when you were — like Ellean. (*She attempts to rise; he restrains her.*) No, no.

Paula. I don't choose to talk about that time. I won't satisfy your curiosity.

Aubrey. My dear Paula, I have no curiosity — I know what you were at Ellean's age. I'll tell you. You hadn't a thought that wasn't a wholesome one, you hadn't an impulse that didn't tend towards good, you never harbored a notion you couldn't have gossiped about to a parcel of children. (*She makes another effort to rise; he lays his hand lightly on her shoulder.*) And this was a very few years back — there are days now when you look like a schoolgirl — but think of the difference between the two Paulas. You'll have to think hard, because after a cruel life, one's perceptions grow a thick skin. But, for God's sake, do think till you get these two images clearly in your mind, and then ask yourself what sort of a friend such a woman as you are to-day would have been for the girl of seven or eight years ago.

Paula (*rising*). How dare you? I could be almost as good a friend to Ellean as her own mother would have been had she lived. I know what you mean. How dare you?

Aubrey. You say that; very likely you believe it. But you're blind, Paula; you're blind. You! Every belief that a young, pure-minded girl holds sacred — that you once held sacred — you now make a target for a jest, a sneer, a paltry cynicism. I tell you, you're not mistress any longer of your thoughts or your tongue. Why, how often, sitting between you and Ellean, have I seen her cheeks turn scarlet as you've rattled off some tale that belongs by right to the club or the smoking-room! Have you noticed the blush? If you have, has the cause of it ever struck you? And this is the girl you say you love, I admit that you *do* love, whose love you expect in return! Oh, Paula, I make the best, the only, excuse for you when I tell you you're blind!

Paula. Ellean — Ellean blushes easily.

Aubrey. You blushed as easily a few years ago.

Paula (*after a short pause*). Well! have you finished your sermon?

Aubrey (*with a gesture of despair*). Oh, Paula!

(*Going up to the window, and standing with his back to the room.*)

Paula (*to herself*). A few — years ago! (*She walks slowly towards the door, then suddenly drops upon the ottoman in a paroxysm of weeping.*) O God! A few years ago!

Aubrey (*going to her*). Paula!

Paula (*sobbing*). Oh, don't touch me!

Aubrey. Paula!

Paula. Oh, go away from me! (*He goes back a few steps, and after a little while she becomes calmer and rises unsteadily; then in an altered tone.*) Look here —! (*He advances a step; she checks him with a quick gesture.*) Look here! Get rid of these people — Mabel and her husband — as soon as possible! I — I've done with them!

Aubrey (*in a whisper*). Paula!

Paula. And then — then — when the time comes for Ellean to leave Mrs. Cortelyon, give me — give me another chance! (*He advances again, but she shrinks away.*) No, no!

(*She goes out by the door on the right. He sinks onto the settee, covering his eyes with his hands. There is a brief silence, then a Servant enters.*)

Servant. Mrs. Cortelyon, sir, with Miss Ellean.

(Aubrey *rises to meet* Mrs. Cortelyon, *who enters, followed by* Ellean, *both being in travelling dresses. The Servant withdraws.*)

Mrs. Cortelyon (*shaking hands with* Aubrey). Oh, my dear Aubrey!

Aubrey. Mrs. Cortelyon! (*Kissing* Ellean.) Ellean dear!

Ellean. Papa, is all well at home?

Mrs. Cortelyon. We're shockingly anxious.

Aubrey. Yes, yes, all's well. This is quite unexpected. (*To* Mrs. Cortelyon.) You've found Paris insufferably hot?

Mrs. Cortelyon. Insufferably hot! Paris is pleasant enough. We've had no letter from you!

Aubrey. I wrote to Ellean a week ago.

Mrs. Cortelyon. Without alluding to the subject I had written to you upon.

Aubrey (*thinking*). Ah, of course —

Mrs. Cortelyon. And since then we've both written, and you've been absolutely silent. Oh, it's too bad!

Aubrey (*picking up the letters from the table*). It isn't altogether my fault. Here are the letters —

Ellean. Papa!

Mrs. Cortelyon. They're unopened.

Aubrey. An accident delayed their reaching me till this evening. I'm afraid this has upset you very much.

Mrs. Cortelyon. Upset me!

Ellean (*in an undertone to* Mrs. Cortelyon). Never mind. Not now, dear — not to-night.

Aubrey. Eh?

Mrs. Cortelyon (*to* Ellean, *aloud*). Child, run away and take your things off. She doesn't look as if she'd journeyed from Paris to-day.

Aubrey. I've never seen her with such a color. (*Taking* Ellean's *hands.*)

Ellean (*to* Aubrey, *in a faint voice*). Papa, Mrs. Cortelyon has been so very, very kind to me, but I — I have come home.

(*She goes out.*)

Aubrey. Come home! (*To* Mrs. Cortelyon.) Ellean returns to us then?

Mrs. Cortelyon. That's the very point I put to you in my letters, and you oblige me to travel from Paris to Willowmere on a warm day to settle it. I think perhaps it's right that Ellean should be with you just now, although I — My dear friend, circumstances are a little altered.

Aubrey. Alice, you're in some trouble.

Mrs. Cortelyon. Well — yes, I *am* in trouble. You remember pretty little Mrs. Brereton who was once Caroline Ardale?

Aubrey. Quite well.

Mrs. Cortelyon. She's a widow now, poor thing. She has the *entresol* of the house where we've been lodging in the Avenue de Friedland. Caroline's a dear chum of mine; she formed a great liking for Ellean.

Aubrey. I'm very glad.

Mrs. Cortelyon. Yes, it's nice for her to meet her mother's friends. Er — that young Hugh Ardale the papers were full of some time ago — he's Caroline Brereton's brother, you know.

Aubrey. No, I didn't know. What did he do? I forget.

Mrs. Cortelyon. Checked one of those horrid mutinies at some far-away station in India. Marched down with a handful of his men and a few faithful natives, and held the place until he was relieved. They gave him his company and a V.C. for it.

Aubrey. And he's Mrs. Brereton's brother?

Mrs. Cortelyon. Yes. He's with his sister — *was*, rather — in Paris. He's home — invalided. Good gracious, Aubrey, why don't you help me out? Can't you guess what has occurred?

Aubrey. Alice!

Mrs. Cortelyon. Young Ardale — Ellean!

Aubrey. An attachment?

Mrs. Cortelyon. Yes, Aubrey. (*After a little pause.*) Well, I suppose I've got myself into sad disgrace. But really I didn't foresee anything of this kind. A serious, reserved child like Ellean, and a boyish, high-spirited soldier — it never struck me as being likely. (Aubrey *paces to and fro thoughtfully.*) I did all I could directly Captain Ardale spoke — wrote to you at once. Why on earth don't you receive your letters promptly, and when you do get them why can't you open them? I endured the anxiety till last night, and then made up my mind — home! Of course, it has worried me terribly. My head's bursting. Are there any salts about? (Aubrey *fetches a bottle from the cabinet and hands it to her.*) We've had one of those hateful smooth crossings that won't let you be properly indisposed.

Aubrey. My dear Alice, I assure you I've no thought of blaming you.

Mrs. Cortelyon. That statement always precedes a quarrel.

Aubrey. I don't know whether this is the worst or the best luck. How will my wife regard it? Is Captain Ardale a good fellow?

Mrs. Cortelyon. My dear Aubrey, you'd better read up the accounts of his wonderful heroism. Face to face with death for a whole week; always with a smile and a cheering word for the poor helpless souls depending on him! Of course it's that that has stirred the depths of your child's nature. I've watched her while we've been dragging the story out of him, and if angels look different from Ellean at that moment, I don't desire to meet any, that's all!

Aubrey. If you were in my position —? But you can't judge.

Mrs. Cortelyon. Why, if I had a marriageable daughter of my own, and Captain Ardale proposed for her, naturally I should cry my eyes out all night — but I should thank Heaven in the morning.

Aubrey. You believe so thoroughly in him?

Mrs. Cortelyon. Do you think I should have only a headache at this minute if I didn't! Look here, you've got to see me down the lane; that's the least you can do, my friend. Come into my house for a moment and shake hands with Hugh.

Aubrey. What, is he here?

Mrs. Cortelyon. He came through with us, to present himself formally to-morrow. Where are my gloves? (Aubrey *fetches them from the ottoman.*) Make my apologies to Mrs. Tanqueray, please. She's well, I hope? (*Going towards the door.*) I can't feel sorry she hasn't seen me in this condition.

(Ellean *enters.*)

Ellean (*to* Mrs. Cortelyon). I've been waiting to wish you good-night. I was afraid I'd missed you.

Mrs. Cortelyon. Good-night, Ellean.

Ellean (*in a low voice, embracing* Mrs. Cortelyon). I can't thank you. Dear Mrs. Cortelyon!

Mrs. Cortelyon (*her arms round* Ellean, *in a whisper to* Aubrey). Speak a word to her. (Mrs. Cortelyon *goes out.*)

Aubrey (*to* Ellean). Ellean, I'm going to see Mrs. Cortelyon home. Tell Paula where I am; explain, dear.

(*Going to the door.*)

Ellean (*her head drooping*). Yes. (*Quickly.*) Father! You are angry with me — disappointed?

Aubrey. Angry? No.

Ellean. Disappointed?

Aubrey (*smiling and going to her and taking her hand*). If so, it's only because you've shaken my belief in my discernment. I thought you took after your poor mother a little, Ellean; but there's a look on your face to-night, dear, that I never saw on hers — never, never.

Ellean (*leaning her head on his shoulder*). Perhaps I ought not to have gone away.

Aubrey. Hush! You're quite happy?

Ellean. Yes.

Aubrey. That's right. Then, as you are quite happy, there is something I particularly want you to do for me, Ellean.

Ellean. What is that?

Aubrey. Be very gentle with Paula. Will you?

Ellean. You think I have been unkind.

Aubrey (*kissing her upon the forehead*). Be very gentle with Paula.

(*He goes out, and she stands looking after him; then, as she turns thoughtfully from the door, a rose is thrown through the window and falls at her feet. She picks up the flower wonderingly and goes to the window.*)

Ellean (*starting back*). Hugh!

(Hugh Ardale, *a handsome young man of about seven-and-twenty, with a boyish face and manner, appears outside the window.*)

Hugh. Nelly! Nelly dear!

Ellean. What's the matter?

Hugh. Hush! Nothing. It's only fun. (*Laughing.*) Ha, ha, ha! I've found out that Mrs. Cortelyon's meadow runs up to your father's plantation; I've come through a gap in the hedge.

Ellean. Why, Hugh?

Hugh. I'm miserable at The Warren: it's so different from the Avenue de Friedland. Don't look like that! Upon my word I meant just to peep at your home and go back, but I saw figures moving about here, and came nearer, hoping to get a glimpse of you. Was that your father?

(*Entering the room.*)

Ellean. Yes.

Hugh. Isn't this fun! A rabbit ran across my foot while I was hiding behind that old yew.

Ellean. You must go away; it's not right for you to be here like this.

Hugh. But it's only fun, I tell you. You take everything so seriously. Do wish me good-night.

Ellean. We have said good-night.

Hugh. In the hall at The Warren, before Mrs. Cortelyon and a man-servant. Oh, it's so different from the Avenue de Friedland!

Ellean (*giving him her hand hastily.*) Good-night, Hugh!

Hugh. Is that all? We might be the merest acquaintances.

(*He momentarily embraces her, but she releases herself.*)

Ellean. It's when you're like this that you make me feel utterly miserable. (*Throwing the rose from her angrily.*) Oh!

Hugh. I've offended you now, I suppose?

Ellean. Yes.

Hugh. Forgive me, Nelly. Come into the garden for five minutes; we'll stroll down to the plantation.

Ellean. No, no.

Hugh. For two minutes — to tell me you forgive me.

Ellean. I forgive you.

Hugh. Evidently. I shan't sleep a wink to-night after this. What a fool I am! Come down to the plantation. Make it up with me.

Ellean. There is somebody coming into this room. Do you wish to be seen here?

Hugh. I shall wait for you behind that yew-tree. You must speak to me, Nelly!

(*He disappears.* Paula *enters.*)

Paula. Ellean!

Ellean. You — you are very surprised to see me, Paula, of course.

Paula. Why are you here? Why aren't you with — your friend?

Ellean. I've come home — if you'll have me. We left Paris this morning; Mrs. Cortelyon brought me back. She was here a minute or two ago; papa has just gone with her to The Warren. He asked me to tell you.

Paula. There are some people staying with us that I'd rather you didn't meet. It was hardly worth your while to return for a few hours.

Ellean. A few hours?

Paula. Well, when do you go to London?

Ellean. I don't think I go to London, after all.

Paula (*eagerly*). You — you've quarrelled with her?

Ellean. No, no, no, not that; but — Paula! (*In an altered tone.*) Paula!

Paula (*startled*). Eh! (Ellean *goes deliberately to* Paula *and kisses her.*) Ellean!

Ellean. Kiss me.

Paula. What — what's come to you?

Ellean. I want to behave differently to you in the future. Is it too late?

Paula. Too — late! (*Impulsively kissing* Ellean *and crying.*) No — no — no! No — no!

Ellean. Paula, don't cry.

Paula (*wiping her eyes*). I'm a little shaky; I haven't been sleeping. It's all right, — talk to me.

Ellean. There is something I want to tell you —

Paula. Is there — is there?

(*They sit together on the ottoman,* Paula *taking* Ellean's *hand.*)

Ellean. Paula, in our house in the Avenue de Friedland, on the floor below us, there was a Mrs. Brereton. She used to be a friend of my mother's. Mrs. Cortelyon and I spent a great deal of our time with her.

Paula (*suspiciously*). Oh! (*Letting* Ellean's *hand fall.*) Is this lady going to take you up in place of Mrs. Cortelyon?

Ellean. No, no. Her brother is staying with her — *was* staying with her. Her brother — (*Breaking off in confusion.*)

Paula. Well?

Ellean (*almost inaudibly*). Paula —

(*She rises and walks away,* Paula *following her.*)

Paula (*taking hold of her*). You're not in love! (Ellean *looks at* Paula *appealingly.*) Oh, *you* in love! You! Oh, this is why you've come home! Of course, you can make friends with me now! You'll leave us for good soon, I suppose; so it doesn't much matter being civil to me for a little while!

Ellean. Oh, Paula!

Paula. Why, how you have deceived us — all of us! We've taken you for a cold-blooded little saint. The fools you've made of us! Saint Ellean, Saint Ellean!

Ellean. Ah, I might have known you'd only mock me!

Paula (*her tone changing*). Eh?

Ellean. I — I can't talk to you. (*Sitting on the settee.*) You do nothing else but mock and sneer, nothing else.

Paula. Ellean dear! Ellean! I didn't mean it. I'm so horribly jealous, it's a sort of curse on me. (*Kneeling beside* Ellean *and embracing her.*) My tongue runs away with me. I'm going to alter, I swear I am. I've made some good resolutions, and as God's above me, I'll keep them! If you are in love, if you do ever marry, that's no reason why we shouldn't be fond of each other. Come, you've kissed me of your own accord — you can't take it back. Now we're friends again, aren't we? Ellean, dear! I want to know everything, everything. Ellean, dear, Ellean!

Ellean. Paula, Hugh has done something that makes me very angry. He came with us from Paris to-day, to see papa. He is staying with Mrs. Cortelyon and — I ought to tell you —

Paula. Yes, yes. What?

Ellean. He has found his way by The Warren meadow through the plantation up to this house. He is waiting to bid me good-night. (*Glancing towards the garden.*) He is — out there.

Paula. Oh!

Ellean. What shall I do?

Paula. Bring him in to see me! Will you?

Ellean. No, no.

Paula. But I'm dying to know him. Oh, yes, you must. I shall meet him before Aubrey does. (*Excitedly running her hands over her hair.*) I'm so glad. (Ellean *goes out by the window.*) The mirror — mirror. What a fright I must look! (*Not finding the hand-glass on the table, she jumps onto the settee, and surveys herself in the mirror over the mantelpiece, then sits quietly down and waits.*) Ellean! Just fancy! Ellean!

(*After a pause* Ellean *enters by the window with* Hugh.)

Ellean. Paula, this is Captain Ardale — Mrs. Tanqueray.

(Paula *rises and turns, and she and* Hugh *stand staring blankly at each other for a moment or two; then* Paula *advances and gives him her hand.*)

Paula (*in a strange voice, but calmly.*) How do you do?

Hugh. How do you do?

Paula (*to* Ellean). Mr. Ardale and I have met in London, Ellean. Er — Captain Ardale now?

Hugh. Yes.

Ellean. In London?

Paula. They say the world's very small, don't they?

Hugh. Yes.

Paula. Ellean, dear, I want to have a little talk about you to Mr. Ardale — Captain Ardale — alone. (*Putting her arms round* Ellean, *and leading her to the door.*) Come back in a little while. (Ellean *nods to* Paula *with a smile and goes out, while* Paula *stands watching her at the open door.*) In a little while — in a little — (*Closing the door and then taking a seat facing* Hugh.) Be quick! Mr. Tanqueray has only gone down to The Warren with Mrs. Cortelyon. What is to be done?

Hugh (*blankly*). Done?

Paula. Done — done. Something must be done.

Hugh. I understood that Mr. Tanqueray had married a Mrs. — Mrs. —

Paula. Jarman?

Hugh. Yes.

Paula. I'd been going by that name. You didn't follow my doings after we separated.

Hugh. No.

Paula (*sneeringly*). No.

Hugh. I went out to India.

Paula. What's to be done?

Hugh. Damn this chance!

Paula. Oh, my God!

Hugh. Your husband doesn't know, does he?

Paula. That you and I —?

Hugh. Yes.

Paula. No. He knows about others.

Hugh. Not about me. How long were we —?

Paula. I don't remember, exactly.

Hugh. Do you — do you think it matters?

Paula. His — his daughter. (*With a muttered exclamation he turns away, and sits with his head in his hands.*) What's to be done?

Hugh. I wish I could think.

Paula. Oh! Oh! What happened to that flat of ours in Ethelbert Street?

Hugh. I let it.

Paula. All that pretty furniture?

Hugh. Sold it.

Paula. I came across the key of the escritoire the other day in an old purse! (*Suddenly realizing the horror and hopelessness of her position, and starting to her feet with an hysterical cry of rage.*) What am I maundering about?

Hugh. For God's sake, be quiet! Do let me think.

Paula. This will send me mad! (*Suddenly turning and standing over him.*) You — you beast, to crop up in my life again like this!

Hugh. I always treated you fairly.

Paula (*weakly*). Oh! I beg your pardon — I know you did — I —

(*She sinks onto the settee crying hysterically.*)

Hugh. Hush!

Paula. She kissed me to-night! I'd won her over! I've had such a fight to make her love me! And now — just as she's beginning to love me, to bring this on her!

Hugh. Hush, hush! Don't break down!

Paula (*sobbing*). You don't know! I — I haven't been getting on well in my marriage. It's been my fault. The life I used to lead spoilt me completely. But I'd made up my mind to turn over a new leaf from to-night. From to-night!

Hugh. Paula —

Paula. Don't you call me that!

Hugh. Mrs. Tanqueray, there is no cause for you to despair in this way. It's all right, I tell you — it *shall* be all right.

Paula (*shivering*). What are we to do?

Hugh. Hold our tongues.

Paula. Eh?

(*Staring vacantly.*)

Hugh. The chances are a hundred to one against any one ever turning up who knew us when we were together. Besides, no one would be such a brute as to split on us. If anybody did do such a thing we should have to lie! What are we upsetting ourselves like this for, when we've simply got to hold our tongues?

Paula. You're as mad as I am.

Hugh. Can you think of a better plan?

Paula. There's only one plan possible — let's come to our senses! — Mr. Tanqueray must be told.

Hugh. Your husband! What, and I lose Ellean! I lose Ellean!

Paula. You've got to lose her.

Hugh. I won't lose her; I can't lose her!

Paula. Didn't I read of your doing any number of brave things in India? Why, you seem to be an awful coward!

Hugh. That's another sort of pluck altogether; I haven't this sort of pluck.

Paula. Oh, I don't ask *you* to tell Mr. Tanqueray. That's my job.

Hugh (*standing over her*). You — you — you'd better! You —

Paula (*rising*). Don't bully me! I intend to.

Hugh (*taking hold of her; she wrenches herself free*). Look here, Paula. I never treated you badly — you've owned it.

Why should you want to pay me out like this? You don't know how I love Ellean!

Paula. Yes, that's just what I *do* know.

Hugh. I say you don't! She's as good as my own mother. I've been downright honest with her, too. I told her, in Paris, that I'd been a bit wild at one time, and, after a damned wretched day, she promised to forgive me because of what I'd done since in India. She's behaved like an angel to me! Surely I oughtn't to lose her, after all, just because I've been like other fellows! No; I haven't been half as rackety as a hundred men we could think of. Paula, don't pay me out for nothing; be fair to me, there's a good girl — be fair to me!

Paula. Oh, I'm not considering you at all! I advise you not to stay here any longer: Mr. Tanqueray is sure to be back soon.

Hugh (*taking up his hat*). What's the understanding between us, then? What have we arranged to do?

Paula. I don't know what you're going to do; I've got to tell Mr. Tanqueray.

Hugh. By God, you shall do nothing of the sort! (*Approaching her fiercely.*)

Paula. You shocking coward!

Hugh. If you dare! (*Going up to the window.*) Mind! If you dare!

Paula (*following him*). Why, what would you do?

Hugh (*after a short pause, sullenly*). Nothing. I'd shoot myself — that's nothing. Good-night.

Paula. Good-night.

(*He disappears. She walks unsteadily to the ottoman, and sits; and as she does so her hand falls upon the little silver mirror, which she takes up, staring at her own reflection.*)

THE FOURTH ACT

The Drawing-room at "Highercoombe," the same evening.

Paula *is still seated on the ottoman, looking vacantly before her, with the little mirror in her hand.* Lady Orreyed *enters.*

Lady Orreyed. There you are! You never came into the billiard-room. Isn't it maddening — Cayley Drummle gives me sixty out of a hundred, and beats me. I must be out of form, because I know I play remarkably well for a lady. Only last month — (Paula *rises.*) Whatever is the matter with you, old girl?

Paula. Why?

Lady Orreyed (*staring*). It's the light, I suppose. (Paula *replaces the mirror on the table.*) By Aubrey's bolting from the billiard-table in that fashion I thought perhaps —

Paula. Yes; it's all right.

Lady Orreyed. You've patched it up? (Paula *nods.*) Oh, I am jolly glad —! I mean —

Paula. Yes, I know what you mean. Thanks, Mabel.

Lady Orreyed (*kissing* Paula). Now take my advice; for the future —

Paula. Mabel, if I've been disagreeable to you while you've been staying here, I — I beg your pardon.

(*Walking away and sitting down.*)

Lady Orreyed. You disagreeable, my dear? I haven't noticed it. Dodo and me both consider you make a first-class hostess; but then you've had such practice, haven't you? (*Dropping on the ottoman and gaping.*) Oh, talk about being sleepy —.

Paula. Why don't you — !

Lady Orreyed. Why, dear, I must hang about for Dodo. You may as well know it; he's in one of his moods.

Paula (*under her breath*). Oh — !

Lady Orreyed. Now, it's not his fault; it was deadly dull for him while we were playing billiards. Cayley Drummle did ask him to mark, but I stopped that; it's so easy to make a gentleman look like a billiard-marker. This is just how it always is; if poor old Dodo has nothing to do, he loses count, as you may say.

Paula. Hark!

(Sir George Orreyed *enters, walking slowly and deliberately; he looks pale and watery-eyed.*)

Sir George (*with mournful indistinctness*). I'm 'fraid we've lef' you a grea' deal to yourself to-night, Mrs. Tanqueray.

Attra'tions of billiards. I apol'gise. I say, where's ol' Aubrey?

Paula. My husband has been obliged to go out to a neighbor's house.

Sir George. I want his advice on a rather pressing matter connected with my family — my family. (*Sitting.*) To-morrow will do just as well.

Lady Orreyed (*to* Paula). This is the mood I hate so — driveling about his precious family.

Sir George. The fact is, Mrs. Tanqueray, I am not easy in my min' 'bout the way I am treatin' my poor ol' mother.

Lady Orreyed (*to* Paula). Do you hear that? That's *his* mother, but *my* mother he won't so much as look at!

Sir George. I shall write to Bruton Street firs' thing in the morning.

Lady Orreyed (*to* Paula). Mamma has stuck to me through everything — well, you know!

Sir George. I'll get ol' Aubrey to figure out a letter. I'll drop line to Uncle Fitz too — dooced shame of the ol' feller to chuck me over in this manner. (*Wiping his eyes.*) All my family have chucked me over.

Lady Orreyed (*rising*). Dodo!

Sir George. Jus' because I've married beneath me, to be chucked over! Aunt Lydia, the General, Hooky Whitgrave, Lady Sugnall — my own dear sister! — all turn their backs on me. It's more than I can stan'!

Lady Orreyed (*approaching him with dignity*). Sir George, wish Mrs. Tanqueray good-night at once, and come upstairs. Do you hear me?

Sir George (*rising angrily*). Wha — !

Lady Orreyed. Be quiet!

Sir George. You presoom to order me about!

Lady Orreyed. You're making an exhibition of yourself!

Sir George. Look 'ere — !

Lady Orreyed. Come along, I tell you!

(*He hesitates, utters a few inarticulate sounds, then snatches up a fragile ornament from the table, and is about to dash it on the ground.* Lady Orreyed *retreats, and* Paula *goes to him.*)

Paula. George!

(*He replaces the ornament.*)

Sir George (*shaking* Paula's *hand*). Good ni', Mrs. Tanqueray.

Lady Orreyed (*to* Paula). Good-night, darling. Wish Aubrey good-night for me. Now, Dodo? (*She goes out.*)

Sir George (*to* Paula). I say, are you goin' to sit up for ol' Aubrey?

Paula. Yes.

Sir George. Shall I keep you comp'ny?

Paula. No, thank you, George.

Sir George. Sure?

Paula. Yes, sure.

Sir George (*shaking hands*). Good-night again.

Paula. Good-night.

(*She turns away. He goes out, steadying himself carefully.* Drummle *appears outside the window, smoking.*)

Drummle (*looking into the room and seeing* Paula). My last cigar. Where's Aubrey?

Paula. Gone down to The Warren to see Mrs. Cortelyon home.

Drummle (*entering the room*). Eh? Did you say Mrs. Cortelyon?

Paula. Yes. She has brought Ellean back.

Drummle. Bless my soul! Why?

Paula. I — I'm too tired to tell you, Cayley. If you stroll along the lane you'll meet Aubrey. Get the news from him.

Drummle (*going up to the window*). Yes, yes. (*Returning to* Paula.) I don't want to bother you, only — the anxious old woman, you know. Are you and Aubrey — ?

Paula. Good friends again?

Drummle (*nodding*). Um.

Paula (*giving him her hand*). Quite, Cayley, quite.

Drummle (*retaining her hand*). That's capital. As I'm off so early to-morrow morning, let me say now — thank you for your hospitality.

(*He bends over her hand gallantly; then goes out by the window.*)

Paula (*to herself*). "Are you and Aubrey — ?" "Good friends again?" "Yes." "Quite, Cayley, quite."

(*There is a brief pause, then* Aubrey *enters hurriedly, wearing a light overcoat and carrying a cap.*)

Aubrey. Paula dear! Have you seen Ellean?

Paula. I found her here when I came down.

Aubrey. She — she's told you?

Paula. Yes, Aubrey.

Aubrey. It's extraordinary, isn't it! Not that somebody should fall in love with Ellean, or that Ellean herself should fall in love. All that's natural enough and was bound to happen, I suppose, sooner or later. But this young fellow! You know his history?

Paula. His history?

Aubrey. You remember the papers were full of his name a few months ago?

Paula. Oh, yes.

Aubrey. The man's as brave as a lion, there's no doubt about that; and, at the same time, he's like a big good-natured school-boy, Mrs. Cortelyon says. Have you ever pictured the kind of man Ellean would marry some day?

Paula. I can't say that I have.

Aubrey. A grave, sedate fellow I've thought about — hah! She has fallen in love with the way in which Ardale practically laid down his life to save those poor people shut up in the Residency. (*Taking off his coat.*) Well, I suppose if a man can do that sort of thing, one ought to be content. And yet — (*Throwing his coat on the settee.*) I should have met him to-night, but he'd gone out. Paula dear, tell me how you look upon this business.

Paula. Yes, I will — I must. To begin with, I — I've seen Mr. Ardale.

Aubrey. Captain Ardale?

Paula. Captain Ardale.

Aubrey. Seen him?

Paula. While you were away he came up here, through our grounds, to try to get a word with Ellean. I made her fetch him in and present him to me.

Aubrey (*frowning*). Doesn't Captain Ardale know there's a lodge and a front door to this place? Never mind! What is your impression of him?

Paula. Aubrey, do you recollect my bringing you a letter — a letter giving you an account of myself — to the Albany late one night — the night before we got married?

Aubrey. A letter?

Paula. You burnt it; don't you know?

Aubrey. Yes; I know.

Paula. His name was in that letter.

Aubrey (*going back from her slowly, and staring at her*). I don't understand.

Paula. Well — Ardale and I once kept house together. (*He remains silent, not moving.*) Why don't you strike me? Hit me in the face — I'd rather you did! Hurt me! hurt me!

Aubrey (*after a pause*). What did you — and this man — say to each other — just now?

Paula. I — hardly — know.

Aubrey. Think!

Paula. The end of it all was that I — I told him I must inform you of — what had happened . . . he didn't want me to do that . . . I declared that I would . . . he dared me to. (*Breaking down.*) Let me alone! — oh!

Aubrey. Where was my daughter while this went on?

Paula. I — I had sent her out of the room . . . that is all right.

Aubrey. Yes, yes — yes, yes.

(*He turns his head towards the door.*)

Paula. Who's that?

(*A Servant enters with a letter.*)

Servant. The coachman has just run up with this from The Warren, sir. (Aubrey *takes the letter.*) It's for Mrs. Tanqueray, sir; there's no answer.

(*The Servant withdraws.* Aubrey *goes to* Paula *and drops the letter into her lap; she opens it with uncertain hands.*)

Paula (*reading it to herself*). It's from — him. He's going away — or gone — I think. (*Rising in a weak way.*) What does it say? I never could make out his writing.

(*She gives the letter to* Aubrey, *and stands near him, looking at the letter over his shoulder as he reads.*)

Aubrey (*reading*). "I shall be in Paris by to-morrow evening. Shall wait there, at

Meurice's, for a week, ready to receive any communication you or your husband may address to me. Please invent some explanation to Ellean. Mrs. Tanqueray, for God's sake, do what you can for me."

(Paula *and* Aubrey *speak in low voices, both still looking at the letter.*)

Paula. Has he left The Warren, I wonder, already?

Aubrey. That doesn't matter.

Paula. No; but I can picture him going quietly off. Very likely he's walking on to Bridgeford or Cottering to-night, to get the first train in the morning. A pleasant stroll for him.

Aubrey. We'll reckon he's gone, that's enough.

Paula. That isn't to be answered in any way?

Aubrey. Silence will answer that.

Paula. He'll soon recover his spirits, I know.

Aubrey. You know. (*Offering her the letter.*) You don't want this, I suppose?

Paula. No.

Aubrey. It's done with — done with.

(*He tears the letter into small pieces. She has dropped the envelope; she searches for it, finds it, and gives it to him.*)

Paula. Here!

Aubrey (*looking at the remnants of the letter*). This is no good; I must burn it.

Paula. Burn it in your room.

Aubrey. Yes.

Paula. Put it in your pocket for now.

Aubrey. Yes.

(*He does so.* Ellean *enters, and they both turn, guiltily, and stare at her.*)

Ellean (*after a short silence, wonderingly*). Papa —

Aubrey. What do you want, Ellean?

Ellean. I heard from Willis that you had come in; I only want to wish you good-night. (Paula *steals away, without looking back.*) What's the matter? Ah! Of course, Paula has told you about Captain Ardale?

Aubrey. Well?

Ellean. Have you and he met?

Aubrey. No.

Ellean. You are angry with him; so was I. But to-morrow when he calls and expresses his regret — to-morrow —

Aubrey. Ellean — Ellean!

Ellean. Yes, papa.

Aubrey. I — I can't let you see this man again. (*He walks away from her in a paroxysm of distress; then, after a moment or two, he returns to her and takes her to his arms.*) Ellean! my child!

Ellean (*releasing herself*). What has happened, papa? What is it?

Aubrey (*thinking out his words deliberately*). Something has occurred, something has come to my knowledge, in relation to Captain Ardale, which puts any further acquaintanceship between you two out of the question.

Ellean. Any further acquaintanceship . . . out of the question?

Aubrey. Yes.

(*Advancing to her quickly, but she shrinks from him.*)

Ellean. No, no — I am quite well. (*After a short pause.*) It's not an hour ago since Mrs. Cortelyon left you and me together here; you had nothing to urge against Captain Ardale then.

Aubrey. No.

Ellean. You don't know each other; you haven't even seen him this evening. Father!

Aubrey. I have told you he and I have not met.

Ellean. Mrs. Cortelyon couldn't have spoken against him to you just now. No, no, no; she's too good a friend to both of us. Aren't you going to give me some explanation? You can't take this position towards me — towards Captain Ardale — without affording me the fullest explanation.

Aubrey. Ellean, there are circumstances connected with Captain Ardale's career which you had better remain ignorant of. It must be sufficient for you that I consider these circumstances render him unfit to be your husband.

Ellean. Father!

Aubrey. You must trust me, Ellean; you must try to understand the depth of my love for you and the — the agony it gives me to hurt you. You must trust me.

Ellean. I will, father; but you must trust me a little too. Circumstances connected with Captain Ardale's career?

Aubrey. Yes.

Ellean. When he presents himself here to-morrow, of course you will see him and let him defend himself?

Aubrey. Captain Ardale will not be here to-morrow.

Ellean. Not! You have stopped his coming here?

Aubrey. Indirectly — yes.

Ellean. But just now he was talking to me at that window! Nothing had taken place then! And since then nothing can have —! Oh! Why — you have heard something against him from Paula.

Aubrey. From — Paula!

Ellean. She knows him.

Aubrey. She has told you so?

Ellean. When I introduced Captain Ardale to her she said she had met him in London. Of course! It is Paula who has done this!

Aubrey (*in a hard voice*). I — I hope you — you'll refrain from rushing at conclusions. There's nothing to be gained by trying to avoid the main point, which is that you must drive Captain Ardale out of your thoughts. Understand that! You're able to obtain comfort from your religion, aren't you? I'm glad to think that's so. I talk to you in a harsh way, Ellean, but I feel your pain almost as acutely as you do. (*Going to the door.*) I — I can't say anything more to you to-night.

Ellean. Father! (*He pauses at the door.*) Father, I'm obliged to ask you this; there's no help for it — I've no mother to go to. Does what you have heard about Captain Ardale concern the time when he led a wild, a dissolute life in London?

Aubrey (*returning to her slowly and staring at her*). Explain yourself!

Ellean. He has been quite honest with me. One day — in Paris — he confessed to me — what a man's life is — what his life had been.

Aubrey (*under his breath*). Oh!

Ellean. He offered to go away, not to approach me again.

Aubrey. And you — you accepted his view of what a man's life is?

Ellean. As far as *I* could forgive him, I forgave him.

Aubrey (*with a groan*). Why, when was it you left us? It hasn't taken you long to get your robe "just a little dusty at the hem!"

Ellean. What do you mean?

Aubrey. Hah! A few weeks ago my one great desire was to keep you ignorant of evil.

Ellean. Father, it is impossible to be ignorant of evil. Instinct, common instinct, teaches us what is good and bad. Surely I am none the worse for knowing what is wicked and detesting it!

Aubrey. Detesting it! Why, you love this fellow!

Ellean. Ah, you don't understand! I have simply judged Captain Ardale as we all pray to be judged. I have lived in imagination through that one week in India when he deliberately offered his life back to God to save those wretched, desperate people. In his whole career I see now nothing but that one week; those few hours bring him nearer the saints, I believe, than fifty uneventful years of mere blamelessness would have done! And so, father, if Paula has reported anything to Captain Ardale's discredit —

Aubrey. Paula — !

Ellean. It must be Paula; it can't be anybody else.

Aubrey. You — you'll please keep Paula out of the question. Finally, Ellean, understand me — I have made up my mind.

(*Again going to the door.*)

Ellean. But wait — listen! I have made up my mind also.

Aubrey. Ah! I recognize your mother in you now!

Ellean. You need not speak against my mother because you are angry with me!

Aubrey. I — I hardly know what I'm saying to you. In the morning — in the morning —

(*He goes out. She remains standing, and turns her head to listen.*

Then, after a moment's hesitation she goes softly to the window, and looks out under the verandah.)

Ellean (*in a whisper*). Paula! Paula!

(Paula *appears outside the window and steps into the room; her face is white and drawn, her hair is a little disordered.)*

Paula (*huskily*). Well?

Ellean. Have you been under the verandah all the while — listening?

Paula. No — no.

Ellean. You *have* overheard us — I see you have. And it *is* you who have been speaking to my father against Captain Ardale. Isn't it? Paula, why don't you own it or deny it?

Paula. Oh, I — I don't mind owning it; why should I?

Ellean. Ah! You seem to have been very, very eager to tell your tale.

Paula. No, I wasn't eager, Ellean. I'd have given something not to have had to do it. I wasn't eager.

Ellean. Not! Oh, I think you might safely have spared us all for a little while.

Paula. But, Ellean, you forget I — I am your stepmother. It was my — my duty — to tell your father what I — what I knew —

Ellean. What you knew! Why, after all, what can you know? You can only speak from gossip, report, hearsay! How is it possible that you —! (*She stops abruptly. The two women stand staring at each other for a moment; then* Ellean *backs away from* Paula *slowly.)* Paula!

Paula. What — what's the matter?

Ellean. You — you knew Captain Ardale in London!

Paula. Why — what do you mean?

Ellean. Oh!

(*She makes for the door, but* Paula *catches her by the wrist.)*

Paula. You shall tell me what you mean!

Ellean. Ah! (*Suddenly, looking fixedly into* Paula's *face.)* You know what I mean.

Paula. You accuse me!

Ellean. It's in your face!

Paula (*hoarsely*). You — you think I'm — that sort of creature, do you?

Ellean. Let me go!

Paula. Answer me! You've always hated me! (*Shaking her.)* Out with it!

Ellean. You hurt me!

Paula. You've always hated me! You shall answer me!

Ellean. Well, then, I have always — always —

Paula. What?

Ellean. I have always known what you were!

Paula. Ah! Who — who told you?

Ellean. Nobody but yourself. From the first moment I saw you I knew you were altogether unlike the good women I'd left; directly I saw you I knew what my father had done. You've wondered why I've turned from you! There — that's the reason! Oh, but this is a horrible way for the truth to come home to every one! Oh!

Paula. It's a lie! It's all a lie! (*Forcing* Ellean *down upon her knees.)* You shall beg my pardon for it. (Ellean *utters a loud shriek of terror.)* Ellean, I'm a good woman! I swear I am! I've always been a good woman! You dare to say I've ever been anything else! It's a lie!

(*Throwing her off violently.)*

(Aubrey *reënters.)*

Aubrey. Paula! (Paula *staggers back as* Aubrey *advances. Raising* Ellean.) What's this? What's this?

Ellean (*faintly*). Nothing. It — it's my fault. Father, I — I don't wish to see Captain Ardale again.

(*She goes out,* Aubrey *slowly following her to the door.)*

Paula. Aubrey, she — she guesses.

Aubrey. Guesses?

Paula. About me — and Ardale.

Aubrey. About you — and Ardale?

Paula. She says she suspected my character from the beginning . . . that's why she's always kept me at a distance . . . and now she sees through —

(*She falters; he helps her to the ottoman, where she sits.)*

Aubrey (*bending over her*). Paula, you

must have said something — admitted something —

Paula. I don't think so. It — it's in my face.

Aubrey. What?

Paula. She tells me so. She's right! I'm tainted through and through; anybody can see it, anybody can find it out. You said much the same to me to-night.

Aubrey. If she has got this idea into her head we must drive it out, that's all. We must take steps to — What shall we do? We had better — better — What — what?

(*Sitting and staring before him.*)

Paula. Ellean! So meek, so demure! You've often said she reminded you of her mother. Yes, I know now what your first marriage was like.

Aubrey. We must drive this idea out of her head. We'll do something. What shall we do?

Paula. She's a regular woman, too. She could forgive *him* easily enough — but *me!* That's just a woman!

Aubrey. What *can* we do?

Paula. Why, nothing! She'd have no difficulty in following up her suspicions. Suspicions! You should have seen how she looked at me! (*He buries his head in his hands. There is silence for a time, then she rises slowly, and goes and sits beside him.*) Aubrey.

Aubrey. Yes.

Paula. I'm very sorry.

(*Without meeting her eyes, he lays his hand on her arm for a moment.*)

Aubrey. Well, we must look things straight in the face. (*Glancing around.*) At any rate, we've done with this.

Paula. I suppose so. (*After a brief pause.*) Of course, she and I can't live under the same roof any more. You know she kissed me to-night, of her own accord.

Aubrey. I asked her to alter towards you.

Paula. That was it, then.

Aubrey. I — I'm sorry I sent her away.

Paula. It was my fault; I made it necessary.

Aubrey. Perhaps now she'll propose to return to the convent — well, she must.

Paula. Would you like to keep her with you and — and leave me?

Aubrey. Paula —!

Paula. You needn't be afraid I'd go back to — what I was. I couldn't.

Aubrey. S—sh, for God's sake! We — you and I — we'll get out of this place . . . what a fool I was to come here again!

Paula. You lived here with your first wife!

Aubrey. We'll get out of this place and go abroad again, and begin afresh.

Paula. Begin afresh?

Aubrey. There's no reason why the future shouldn't be happy for us — no reason that I can see —

Paula. Aubrey!

Aubrey. Yes.

Paula. You'll never forget this, you know.

Aubrey. This?

Paula. To-night, and everything that's led up to it. Our coming here, Ellean, our quarrels — cat and dog! — Mrs. Cortelyon, the Orreyeds, this man! What an everlasting nightmare for you!

Aubrey. Oh, we can forget it, if we choose.

Paula. That was always your cry. How *can* one do it!

Aubrey. We'll make our calculations solely for the future, talk about the future, think about the future.

Paula. I believe the future is only the past again, entered through another gate.

Aubrey. That's an awful belief.

Paula. To-night proves it. You must see now that, do what we will, go where we will, you'll be continually reminded of — what I was. I see it.

Aubrey. You're frightened to-night; meeting this man has frightened you. But that sort of thing isn't likely to recur. The world isn't quite so small as all that.

Paula. Isn't it! The only great distances it contains are those we carry within ourselves — the distances that separate husbands and wives, for instance. And so it'll be with us. You'll do your best — oh, I know that — you're a good fellow. But circumstances will be too strong for you in the end, mark my words.

Aubrey. Paula —!

Paula. Of course I'm pretty now — I'm pretty still — and a pretty woman, whatever else she may be, is always — well, endurable. But even now I notice that the lines of my face are getting deeper; so are the hollows about my eyes. Yes, my face is covered with little shadows that usen't to be there. Oh, I know I'm "going off." I hate paint and dye and those messes, but by and by, I shall drift the way of the others; I shan't be able to help myself. And then, some day — perhaps very suddenly, under a queer, fantastic light at night or in the glare of the morning — that horrid, irresistible truth that physical repulsion forces on men and women will come to you, and you'll sicken at me.

Aubrey. I —!

Paula. You'll see me then, at last, with other people's eyes; you'll see me just as your daughter does now, as all wholesome folks see women like me. And I shall have no weapon to fight with — not one serviceable little bit of prettiness left me to defend myself with! A worn-out creature — broken up, very likely, some time before I ought to be — my hair bright, my eyes dull, my body too thin or too stout, my cheeks raddled and ruddled — a ghost, a wreck, a caricature, a candle that gutters, call such an end what you like! Oh, Aubrey, what shall I be able to say to you then? And this is the future you talk about! I know it — I know it! (*He is still sitting staring forward; she rocks herself to and fro as if in pain.*) Oh, Aubrey! Oh! Oh!

Aubrey. Paula —!

(*Trying to comfort her.*)

Paula. Oh, and I wanted so much to sleep to-night! (*Laying her head upon his shoulder. From the distance, in the garden, there comes the sound of* Drummle's *voice; he is singing as he approaches the house.*) That's Cayley, coming back from The Warren. (*Starting up.*) He doesn't know, evidently. I — I won't see him!

(*She goes out quickly.* Drummle's *voice comes nearer.* Aubrey *rouses himself and snatches up a book from table, making a pretence of reading.*)

(*After a moment or two,* Drummle *appears at the window and looks in.*)

Drummle. Aha! my dear chap!

Aubrey. Cayley?

Drummle (*coming into the room*). I went down to The Warren after you.

Aubrey. Yes?

Drummle. Missed you. Well — I've been gossiping with Mrs. Cortelyon. Confound you, I've heard the news!

Aubrey. What have you heard?

Drummle. What have I heard! Why — Ellean and young Ardale! (*Looking at* Aubrey *keenly.*) My dear Aubrey! Alice is under the impression that you are inclined to look on the affair favorably.

Aubrey (*rising and advancing to* Drummle). You've not — met — Captain Ardale?

Drummle. No. Why do you ask? By the by, I don't know that I need tell you — but it's rather strange. He's not at The Warren to-night.

Aubrey. No?

Drummle. He left the house half an hour ago, to stroll about the lanes; just now a note came from him, a scribble in pencil simply telling Alice that she would receive a letter from him to-morrow. What's the matter? There's nothing very wrong, is there? My dear chap, pray forgive me, if I'm asking too much.

Aubrey. Cayley, you — you urged me to send her away!

Drummle. Ellean! Yes, yes. But — but — by all accounts this is quite an eligible young fellow. Alice has been giving me the history —

Aubrey. Curse him! (*Hurling his book to the floor.*) Curse him! Yes, I do curse him — him and his class! Perhaps I curse myself, too, in doing it. He has only led "a man's life" — just as I, how many of us have done! The misery he has brought on me and mine it's likely enough we, in our time, have helped to bring on others by this leading "a man's life"! But I do curse him for all that. My God, *I've* nothing more to fear — I've paid *my* fine! And so I can curse him in safety. Curse him! Curse him!

Drummle. In Heaven's name, tell me what's happened?

Aubrey (*gripping* Drummle's *arm*). Paula! Paula!

Drummle. What?

Aubrey. They met to-night here. They — they — they're not strangers to each other.

Drummle. Aubrey!

Aubrey. Curse him! My poor, wretched wife! My poor, wretched wife!

(*The door opens and* Ellean *appears. The two men turn to her. There is a moment's silence.*)

Ellean. Father . . . father . . .!

Aubrey. Ellean?

Ellean. I — I want you. (*He goes to her.*) Father . . . go to Paula! (*He looks into her face, startled.*) Quickly — quickly! (*He passes her to go out; she seizes his arm, with a cry.*) No, no; don't go!

(*He shakes her off and goes.* Ellean *staggers back towards* Drummle.)

Drummle (*to* Ellean). What do you mean? What do you mean?

Ellean. I — I went to her room — to tell her I was sorry for something I had said to her. And I *was* sorry — I *was* sorry. I heard the fall. I — I've seen her. It's horrible.

Drummle. She — she has —!

Ellean. Killed — herself? Yes — yes. So, everybody will say. But I know — I helped to kill her. If I'd only been merciful!

(*She faints upon the ottoman. He pauses for a moment irresolutely — then he goes to the door, opens it, and stands looking out.*)

THE LIARS

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

By HENRY ARTHUR JONES

(1897)

"Above all things, tell no untruth; no, not in trifles; the custom of it is naughty." — *Sir Henry Sidney's letter to his son Philip Sidney.*

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PERSONS REPRESENTED

COLONEL SIR CHRISTOPHER DEERING.
EDWARD FALKNER.
GILBERT NEPEAN, Lady Jessica's husband.
GEORGE NEPEAN, Gilbert's brother.
FREDDIE TATTON, Lady Rosamund's husband.
ARCHIBALD COKE, Dolly's husband.
Waiter at "The Star and Garter."
GADSBY, footman at Freddie Tatton's.
TAPLIN, Sir Christopher's servant.
Footman at Cadogan Gardens.

LADY JESSICA NEPEAN } sisters.
LADY ROSAMUND TATTON }
DOLLY COKE, their cousin.
BEATRICE EBERNOE.
MRS. CRESPIN.
FERRIS, Lady Jessica's maid.

THE LIARS

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

ACT I

Scene: — *Interior of a large tent on the lawn of* Freddie Tatton's *house in the Thames valley. The roof of the tent slopes up from the back of the stage. An opening at back discovers the lawn, a night scene of a secluded part of the Thames, and the opposite bank beyond. Small opening* L. *The tent is of Eastern material, splendidly embroidered in rich Eastern colors. The floor is planked and some rugs are laid down. The place is comfortably furnished for summer tea and smoking-room. Several little tables, chairs and lounges, most of them of basket-work. On the table spirit-decanters, soda-water bottles, cigars, cigarettes, empty coffee cups, match-box, etc. Some plants in the corners. Lamps and candles lighted.*

Time: *After dinner on a summer evening.*

(*Discover* Archibald Coke *and* "Freddie" Tatton. Coke, *a tall, pompous, precise man, about fifty, is seated at side table smoking.* Freddie, *a nervous, weedy little creature about thirty, with no whiskers, and nearly bald, with a very squeaky voice, is walking about.*)

Freddie (*very excited, very voluble, very squeaky*). It's all very well for folks to say, "Give a woman her head; don't ride her on the curb." But I tell you this, Coke, when a fellow has got a wife like mine, or Jess, it's confoundedly difficult to get her to go at all without a spill, eh?

Coke. It is perplexing to know precisely how to handle a wife (*drinks, sighs*) — very perplexing!

Freddie. Perplexing? It's a d—ee—d silly riddle without any answer! You know I didn't want to have this house-party for the Regatta — (Coke *looks at him.*) — I beg your pardon. Of course I wanted to have you and Dolly, and I didn't mind Gilbert and Jess. But I didn't want to have Falkner here. He's paying a great deal too much attention to Jess, and Jess doesn't choke him off as she should. Well, I thoroughly made up my mind if Jess came, Falkner shouldn't.

Coke. Yes?

Freddie. Well, Rosamund said he should. So I stuck out, and she stuck out, in fact we both stuck out for a week. I was determined he shouldn't come.

Coke. Then why did you give in?

Freddie. I didn't.

Coke. But he's here!

Freddie. Yes; but only for a few days. Rosamund invited him, unknown to me, and then — well — you see, I was obliged to be civil to the fellow. (*Very confidential.*) I say, Coke — we're tiled in, aren't we? Candidly, what would you do if you had a wife like Rosamund?

Coke (*sententiously*). Ah! Just so! (*Drinks.*)

Freddie. You're the lucky man of us three, Coke.

Coke. I must own my wife has some good points —

Freddie. Dolly got good points! I should think she has!

Coke. But she's terribly thoughtless and frivolous.

Freddie. So much the better. Give me a woman that lets a man call his soul his own. That's all I want, Coke, to call my soul my own. And — (*resolutely*) some of these days — (*very resolutely*) I will, that's all!

(*Enter* Mrs. Crespin, *a sharp, good-looking woman between thirty and thirty-five.*)

Mrs. C. Is Mr. Gilbert Nepean leaving for Devonshire to-night?

Freddie. Yes. He takes the eleven thirty-four slow and waits for the down fast at Reading.

Mrs. C. To-night?

Freddie. Yes. His steward, Crampton, has been robbing him for years, and now the fellow has bolted with a heap of money and a farmer's wife.

Mrs. C. Mr. Nepean must go to-night?

Freddie. Yes. Why?

Mrs. C. Lady Jessica and Mr. Falkner have gone for a little moonlight row. I thought Mr. Nepean might like to stay and steer.

Freddie. Oh, Lady Jessica knows the river well.

Mrs. C. Ah, then Mr. Nepean can look after the steward. After all, no husband need emphasize the natural absurdity of his position by playing cox to another man's stroke, need he.

(*Enter* Colonel Sir Christopher Deering, *a genial, handsome Englishman about thirty-eight, and* George Nepean, *a dark, rather heavy-looking man about the same age.*)

Sir C. Oh, nonsense, Nepean; you're mistaken!

George. You'd better say a word to Falkner —

Sir C. (*with a warning look*). Shush!

George. If you don't, I shall drop a very strong hint to my brother.

Sir C. (*more peremptorily*). Shush, Shush!

Freddie. What's the matter?

Sir C. Nothing, Freddie, nothing! Our friend here (*trying to link his arm in* George's — George *stands off*) is a little old-fashioned. He doesn't understand that in all really innocent flirtations ladies allow themselves a very large latitude indeed. In fact, from my very modest experience with the sex — take it for what it's worth — I should say the more innocent the flirtation, the larger the latitude the lady allows herself, eh, Mrs. Crespin?

Mrs. C. Oh, we are all latitudinarians at heart.

Sir C. Yes; but a lady who practises extensively as a latitudinarian rarely becomes a — a — a longitudinarian, eh?

Mrs. C. Oh, I wouldn't answer for her! It's a horrid, wicked world; and if once a woman allows one of you wretches to teach her the moral geography of it, it's ten to one she gets her latitude and longitude mixed before she has had time to look at the map.

Freddie (*to* Sir Christopher). I say, I'm awfully sorry about this. You know I told Rosamund how it would be if we had Falkner here —

Sir C. (*draws* Freddie *aside*). Shush! Tell Lady Rosamund to caution Lady Jessica —

Freddie. I will. But Rosamund generally does just the opposite of what I tell her. Don't be surprised, old fellow, if you hear some of these days that I've — well, don't be surprised.

Sir C. At what?

Freddie. Well, I shall — now, candidly, old fellow — we're tiled in, quite between ourselves — if you found yourself landed as I am, what would you do?

Sir C. You mean if I found myself married?

Freddie. Yes.

Sir C. I should make the best of it.

George (*to* Sir C.). Then it's understood that you'll give Falkner a hint?

Sir C. My dear fellow, surely your brother is the best judge —

George. Of what he doesn't see?

Sir C. He's here.

George. He's leaving for Devonshire to-night — unless I stop him. Will that be necessary?

Sir C. No. Falkner is my friend. I introduced him to Lady Jessica. If you insist, I'll speak to him. But I'm sure you're wrong. He's the very soul of honor. I didn't live with him out there those three awful years without knowing him.

George. I don't see what your living three years in Africa with him has got to do with it, eh, Mrs. Crespin?

Mrs. C. Let's see how it works out. Falkner behaves most gallantly in Africa. Falkner rescues Mrs. Ebernoe. Falkner splendidly avenges Colonel Ebernoe's death, and strikes terror into every slave-dealer's heart. Falkner returns to England covered with glory. A grateful nation goes into a panic of admiration, and makes itself slightly ridiculous over Falkner. Falkner is the lion of the season. Therefore we may be quite sure that Falkner won't make love to any pretty woman who comes in his way. It doesn't seem to work out right.

Sir C. But Falkner is not an ordinary man, not even an ordinary hero.

Mrs. C. My dear Sir Christopher, the one cruel fact about heroes is that they are made of flesh and blood! Oh, if only they were made of waxwork, of Crown Derby ware, or Britannia metal; but, alas and alas! they're always made of flesh and blood.

Coke. Where did Falkner come from? What were his people?

Sir C. His grandfather was what Nonconformists call an eminent divine, his father was a rich city merchant; his mother was a farmer's daughter. Falkner himself is a — well, he's a Puritan Don Quixote, mounted on Pegasus.

Mrs. C. Put a Puritan Don Quixote on horseback, and he'll ride to the — Lady Jessica, eh?

Sir C. Hush! He'll love and he'll ride away.

Mrs. C. (*significantly*). I sincerely hope so.

Coke. I must say that Falkner is less objectionable than Dissenters generally are. I have an unconquerable aversion to Dissenters.

Sir C. Oh, I hate 'em. But they saved England, hang 'em! And I'm not sure whether they're not the soundest part of the nation to-day.

Mrs. C. Oh, pray don't tell them so, just as they're getting harmless and sensible — and a little artistic.

(*A piano is played very softly and beautifully at a distance of some twenty yards. They all listen.*)

Mrs. C. Is that Mrs. Ebernoe?

Sir C. Yes.

Mrs. C. What a beautiful touch she has!

Sir C. She has a beautiful nature.

Mrs. C. Indeed! I thought she was a little stiff and unsociable. But perhaps we are too frivolous.

Sir C. Perhaps. And she hasn't quite recovered from poor Ebernoe's death.

(*Enter* Lady Rosamund *and* Dolly Coke *in evening dress.* Dolly *is without any wrap on her shoulders.*)

Mrs. C. But that's nearly two years ago. Is it possible we still have women amongst us who can mourn two years for a man? It gives me hopes again for my sex.

Freddie (*his back to* Lady Rosamund). I know jolly well Rosamund won't mourn two years for me.

Lady R. (*a clear-cut, bright, pretty woman*). You're quite right, Freddie, I shan't. But if you behave very prettily meantime, I promise you a decent six weeks. So be satisfied, and don't make a disturbance down there (*with a little gesture pointing down*) and create the impression that I wasn't a model wife.

Coke (*in a very querulous, pedantic tone to* Dolly). No wrap again! Really, my dear, I do wish you would take more precautions against the night air. If you should take influenza again —

Dolly (*pretty, empty-headed little woman*). Oh, my dear Archie, if I do, it is I who will have to cough and sneeze!

Coke. Yes; but it is I who will be compelled to listen to you. I do wish you would remember how very inconvenient it is for me when you have influenza.

Dolly. Oh, my dear, you don't expect me to remember *all* the things that are inconvenient to you. Besides other people don't wrap up. Jessica is out on the river with absolutely nothing on her shoulders.

Mrs. C. Is it not a physiological fact that when our hearts reach a certain temperature our shoulders may be, and often are, safely left bare?

(George Nepean *has been listening. He comes some steps towards them as if about to speak, stops, then turns and exit with great determination.*)

Sir C. Mrs. Crespin, you saw that?

Mrs. C. Yes. Where has he gone?

Sir C. I suppose to tell his brother his suspicions. I'm sure you meant nothing just now, but — (*glancing round*) — we are all friends of Lady Jessica's, aren't we?

Mrs. C. Oh, certainly. But don't you think you ought to get Mr. Falkner away?

Sir C. He'll be leaving England soon. These fresh outbreaks amongst the slave-traders will give us no end of trouble, and the Government will have to send Falkner out. Meantime —

Mrs. C. Meantime, doesn't Mrs. Ebernoe play divinely?

Sir C. (*politely intercepting her*). Meantime it's understood that nothing more is to be said of this?

Mrs. C. Oh, my dear Sir Christopher, what more can be said?

(*Exit.*)

Sir C. (*holding the tent curtains aside for her to pass out; looks after her, shakes his head, perplexed, then turns to* Coke). Coke what do you say, a hundred up?

Coke. I'm agreeable! Dolly! Dolly!

(Lady Rosamund, Dolly, *and* Freddie *are chattering very vigorously together.*)

Dolly (*doesn't turn round to him*). Well?

(*Goes on chattering to* Lady Rosamund *and* Freddie.)

Coke. You had a tiresome hacking cough, dear, during the greater portion of last night.

Dolly. Did I? (*Same business.*)

Coke. It would be wise to keep away from the river.

Dolly. Oh, very well, dear. I'll try and remember.

(*Same business.*)

Coke (*turns, annoyed, to* Sir Christopher). I'm a painfully light sleeper. The least thing disturbs me, and — (*Looks anxiously at* Dolly, *who is still chattering, then turns to* Sir C.) Do you sleep well?

Sir C. (*links his arm in* Coke's). Like a top. Never missed a night's rest in my life.

(*Takes* Coke *off at opening.*)

Freddie (*has been talking angrily to* Lady Rosamund). Very well then, what am I to do?

Dolly. Oh, do go and get a whisky and soda, there's a dear Freddie!

Freddie. That's all very well, but if Jessica goes and makes a fool of herself in my house, people will say it was my fault.

Lady R. What — example, or influence, or sheer desperate imitation?

Freddie (*pulls himself up, looks very satirical, evidently tries to think of some crushing reply without success*). I must say, Rosamund, that your continued chaff of me and everything that I do is in execrable taste? For a woman to chaff her husband on all occasions is — well, it's in very bad taste, that's all I can say about it!

(*Exit.*)

Dolly. Freddie's getting a dreadful fidget. He's nearly as bad as Archie.

Lady R. Oh, my dear, he's ten times worse. One can't help feeling some small respect for Archie.

Dolly. Oh, do you think so? Well, yes, I suppose Archie is honorable and all that.

Lady R. Oh, all men are honorable. They get kicked out if they aren't. My Freddie's honorable in his poor little way.

Dolly. Oh, don't run Freddie down. I rather like Freddie.

Lady R. Oh, if you had to live with him —

Dolly. Well, he always lets you have your own way.

Lady R. I wish he wouldn't. I really believe I should love and respect him a little more if he were to take me and give me a good shaking, or do something to make me feel that he's my master. But (*sighs*) he never will! He'll only go on asking everybody's advice how to manage me — and never find out. As if it weren't the easiest thing in the world to manage a woman — if men only knew.

Dolly. Oh, do you think so? I wonder if poor old Archie knows how to manage me!

Lady R. Archie's rather trying at times.

Dolly. Oh, he is! He's so frumpish and particular, and he's getting worse.

Lady R. Oh, my dear, they do as they grow older.

Dolly. Still, after all, Freddie and Archie aren't quite so awful as Gilbert.

Lady R. Oh, Gilbert's a terror. I hope Jessica won't do anything foolish —

(*A very merry peal of laughter heard off, followed by* Lady Jessica's *voice.*)

(*Heard off.*) Oh, no, no, no, no, no! Please keep away from my dress! Oh, I'm so sorry! (*Laughing a little.*) But you are — so — so —

(*Another peal of laughter.*)

Falkner (*heard off, a deep, rich, sincere, manly tone*). So ridiculous? I don't mind that!

Lady J. (*heard off*). But you'll take cold. Do go and change!

Falkner (*heard off*). Change? That's not possible!

(Lady Jessica *appears at opening at back, looking off, smothering her laughter. She is a very bright, pretty woman about twenty-seven, very dainty and charming. Piano ceases.*)

Lady J. Oh, the poor dear, foolish fellow! Look!

Lady R. What is it?

Lady J. My ten-and-sixpenny brooch! He kept on begging for some little souvenir, so I took this off. That quite unhinged him. I saw he was going to be demonstrative, so I dropped the brooch in the river and made a terrible fuss. He jumped in, poor dear, and fished it up. It was so muddy at the bottom! He came up looking like a *fin-de-siècle* Neptune — or a forsaken merman — or the draggled figure-head of a penny Thames steamboat.

Lady R. (*very seriously*). Jess, the men are talking about you.

Lady J. (*very carelessly*). Ah, are they? Who is?

Lady R. My Freddie says that you —

Lady J. (*interrupting on "says"*). My dear Rosy, I don't mind what your Freddie says any more than you do.

Lady R. But George has been fizzing up all the evening.

Lady J. Oh, let him fizz down again.

Lady R. But I believe he has gone to give Gilbert a hint —

Lady J. (*showing annoyance*). Ah, that's mean of George! How vexing! Perhaps Gilbert will stay now.

Lady R. Perhaps it's as well that Gilbert should stay.

Lady J. What? My dear Rosy, you know I'm the very best of wives, but it does get a little monotonous to spend all one's time in the company of a man who doesn't understand a joke — not even when it's explained to him!

Lady R. Jess, you really must pull up.

Dolly. Yes, Jess. Mrs. Crespin was making some very cattish remarks about you and Mr. Falkner.

Lady J. Was she? Rosy, why do you have that woman here?

Lady R. I don't know. One must have somebody. I thought you and she were very good friends.

Lady J. Oh, we're the best of friends, only we hate each other like poison.

Lady R. I don't like her. But she says such stinging things about my Freddie, and makes him so wild.

Lady J. Does she? I'll ask her down for the shooting. Oh! I've got a splendid idea!

Lady R. What is it?

Lady J. A new career for poor gentlewomen. You found a school and carefully train them in all the best traditions of the gentle art of husband-baiting. Then you invite one of them to your house, pay her, of course, a handsome salary, and she assists you in "the daily round, the common task" of making your husband's life a perfect misery to him. After a month or so she is played out and retires to another sphere, and you call in a new — lady-help!

Lady R. Oh, I don't think I should care to have my Freddie systematically henpecked by another woman.

Lady J. No; especially as you do it so well yourself. Besides, your Freddie is such a poor little pocket-edition of a man — I hope you don't mind my saying so —

Lady R. Oh, not at all. He's your own brother-in-law.

Lady J. Yes; and you may say what you like about Gilbert.

Dolly. Oh, we do, don't we, Rosy?

Lady J. Do you? Well, what do you say?

Dolly. Oh, it wouldn't be fair to tell, would it, Rosy? But Mrs. Crespin said yesterday —

(Lady Rosamund *glances at* Dolly *and stops her.*)

Lady J. About Gilbert?

Dolly. Yes.

Lady J. Well, what did she say?

(Dolly *glances at* Lady Rosamund *inquiringly.*)

Lady R. No, Dolly, no!

Lady J. Yes, Dolly! Do tell me.

Lady R. No, no!

Lady J. I don't care what she said, so long as she didn't say he could understand a joke. That would be shamefully untrue. I've lived with him for five years, and I'm sure he can't. But what did Mrs. Crespin say, Rosy?

Lady R. No, it really was a little too bad.

Dolly. Yes. I don't much mind what anybody says about Archie, but if Mrs. Crespin had said about him what she said about Gilbert ——

Lady J. But what did she say? Rosy, if you don't tell me, I won't tell you all the dreadful things I hear about your Freddie. Oh, do tell me! There's a dear!

Lady R. (*begins laughing*). Well she said — (Dolly *begins laughing.*)

Lady J. Oh, go on! go on! go on!

Lady R. She said — no, I'll whisper!

(Lady Jessica *inclines her ear,* Lady Rosamund *whispers;* Dolly *laughs.*)

Lady J. (*beginning to laugh*). About Gilbert?

Lady R. (*laughing*). Yes.

(*They all join in a burst of laughter which grows louder and louder. At its height enter* Gilbert Nepean. *He is a man rather over forty, much the same build as his brother* George; *rather stout, heavy figure, dark complexion; strong, immobile, uninteresting features; large, coarse hands; a habit of biting his nails. He is dressed in tweeds, long light ulster and travelling cap, which he does not remove. As he enters, the laughter, which has been very boisterous, suddenly ceases. He goes up to table without taking any notice of the ladies; very deliberately takes out cigar from case, strikes a match which does not ignite, throws it down with an angry gesture and exclamation; strikes another which also does not ignite; throws it down with a still angrier gesture and exclamation. The third match ignites, and he deliberately lights his cigar. Meantime, as soon as he has reached table,* Lady Jessica, *who stands behind him, exchanges glances with* Dolly *and* Lady Rosamund, *and makes a little face behind his back.* Lady R. *winks at* Lady Jessica, *who responds by pulling a mock long face.* Lady R. *steals off.* Dolly *shrugs her shoulders at* Lady Jessica, *who pulls her face still longer.* Dolly *steals quietly off after* Lady Rosamund. Gilbert *is still busy with his cigar.* Lady Jessica *does a little expressive pantomime behind his back.*)

Gilbert. What's all this tomfoolery with Falkner?

Lady J. Tomfoolery?

Gilbert. George says you are carrying on some tomfoolery with Falkner.

Lady J. Ah! that's very sweet and elegant of George. But I never carry on any tomfoolery with anyone — because I'm not a tomfool, therefore I can't.

Gilbert. I wish for once in your life you'd give me a plain answer to a plain question.

Lady J. Oh, I did once. You shouldn't remind me of that. But I never bear malice. Ask me another, such as — if a herring and a half cost three ha'pence, how long will it take one's husband to learn politeness enough to remove his cap in his wife's presence?

GILBERT (*instinctively takes off his cap, then glancing at her attitude, which is one of amused defiance, he puts the cap on again*). There's a draught here.

LADY J. The lamp doesn't show it. But perhaps you are right to guard a sensitive spot.

GILBERT. I say there's a confounded draught.

LADY J. Oh, don't tell fibs, dear. Because if you do, you'll go — where you *may* meet me; and then we should have to spend such a very long time together.

GILBERT (*nonplussed, a moment or two; takes out his watch*). I've no time to waste. I must be down in Devonshire to-morrow to go into this business of Crampton's. But before I go, I mean to know the truth of this nonsense between you and Falkner.

LADY J. Ah!

GILBERT. Shall I get it from you — or from him?

LADY J. Wouldn't it be better to get it from me? Because he mightn't tell you *all?*

GILBERT. *All?* Then there is something to know?

LADY J. Heaps. And if you'll have the ordinary politeness to take off that very ugly cap I'll be very sweet and obedient and tell you *all.*

GILBERT. Go on!

LADY J. Not while the cap sits there!

GILBERT. I tell you I feel the draught.

(LADY JESSICA *rises, goes to the tent openings, carefully draws the curtains. He watches her, sulkily.*)

LADY J. There! now you may safely venture to uncover the sensitive spot.

GILBERT (*firmly*). No.

LADY J. (*serenely, seated*). Very well, my dear. Then I shan't open my lips.

GILBERT. You won't?

LADY J. No; and I'm sure it's far more important for you to know what is going on between Mr. Falkner and me than to have that horrid thing sticking on your head.

GILBERT (*takes a turn or two, bites his nails, at length sulkily flings the cap on the chair*). Now!

LADY J. Mr. Falkner is very deeply attached to me, I believe.

GILBERT. He has told you so?

LADY J. No.

GILBERT. No?

LADY J. No; but that's only because I keep on stopping him.

GILBERT. You keep on stopping him?

LADY J. Yes; it's so much pleasanter to have him dangling for a little while, and *then* —

GILBERT. Then what?

LADY J. Well, it is pleasant to be admired.

GILBERT. And you accept his admiration?

LADY J. Of course I do. Why shouldn't I? If Mr. Falkner admires me, isn't that the greatest compliment he can pay to your taste? And if he spares you the drudgery of being polite to me, flattering me, complimenting me, and paying me the hundred delicate little attentions that win a woman's heart, I'm sure you ought to be very much obliged to him for taking all that trouble off your hands.

GILBERT (*looks furious*). Now understand me. This nonsense has gone far enough. I forbid you to have anything further to say to the man.

LADY J. Ah, you forbid me!

GILBERT. I forbid you. And, understand, if you do —

LADY J. Ah, take care! Don't threaten me!

GILBERT. Do you mean to respect my wishes?

LADY J. Of course I shall respect your wishes. I may not obey them, but I will respect them.

GILBERT (*enraged, comes up to her very angrily*). Now, Jessica, once for all —

(*Enter* GEORGE. GILBERT *stops suddenly.*)

GEORGE. The dog-cart's ready, Gilbert. What's the matter?

Gilbert. Nothing. (*To* Lady Jessica.) You'll please to come on to me at Teignwick to-morrow.

Lady J. Can't. I've promised to go to Barbara, and I must keep my promise, even though it parts me from you.

(*Enter Servant.*)

Serv. You've only just time to catch the train, sir.

Gilbert. I'm not going.

Serv. Not going, sir?

Gilbert. No. (*Exit Servant.*)

Lady J. (*appeals to* George). Isn't it dear of him to stay here on my account when he knows he ought to be in Devon? Isn't it sweet to think that after five long years one has still that magnetic attraction for one's husband?

Gilbert. No. I'm hanged if I stay on your account. (*Goes up to opening, calls out.*) Hi! Gadsby! I'm coming! Understand, I expect you at Teignwick to-morrow.

Lady J. Dearest, I shan't come.

Gilbert. I say you shall!

Lady J. "Shall" is not a pretty word for a husband to use.

(*Takes up the cap he has thrown down and stands twiddling the tassel.*)

Gilbert (*after a furious dig at his nails*). George, I expect this business of Crampton's will keep me for a week, but I can't tell. Look after everything while I'm away. (*To* Lady Jessica.) You won't come to Teignwick?

Lady J. I've promised Barbara. Here's your cap.

Gilbert. Good-bye, George!

(*Looks at* Lady Jessica, *and is then going off at back.*)

Lady J. Ta, ta, dearest!

Gilbert (*turns, comes a step or two to* Lady Jessica, *livid with anger; speaks in her ear*). You'll go just one step too far some day, madam, and if you do, look out for yourself, for, by God! I won't spare you!

(*Exit.* Lady Jessica *stands a little frightened, goes up to opening at back, as if to call him back, comes down.* George *stands watching her, smoking.*)

Lady J. (*after a little pause*). George, that was very silly of you to tell Gilbert about Mr. Falkner and me.

George. I thought you had gone far enough.

Lady J. Oh no, my dear friend. You must allow me to be the best judge of how far —

George. How far you can skate over thin ice?

Lady J. The thinner the ice the more delicious the fun, don't you think? Ah, you're like Gilbert. You don't skate — or joke.

George. You heard what Gilbert said?

Lady J. Yes; that was a hint to you. Won't it be rather a tiresome task for you?

George. What?

Lady J. To keep an eye on me, watch that I don't go that one step too far. And not quite a nice thing to do, eh?

George. Oh, I've no intention of watching you —

(*Enter* Falkner.)

(*Looking at the two.*) Not the least intention, I assure you. (*Exit.*)

Lady J. So to-morrow will break up our pleasant party.

Falkner (*about forty, strong, fine, clearly-cut features, earnest expression, hair turning gray, complexion pale and almost gray with continued work, anxiety, and abstinence*). And after to-morrow?

Lady J. Ah, after to-morrow!

Falkner. When shall we meet again?

Lady J. Shall we meet again? Yes, I suppose. Extremes do meet, don't they?

Falkner. Are we extremes?

Lady J. Aren't we? I suppose I'm the vainest, emptiest, most irresponsible creature in the world ——

Falkner. You're not! you're not! You slander yourself! You can be sincere, you can be earnest, you can be serious —

Lady J. Can I? Oh, do tell me what fun there is in being serious! I can't see the use of it. There you are, for instance, mounted on that high horse of seriousness, spending the best years of your life in fighting African slave-traders and other windmills of that sort. Oh do leave the windmills alone! They'll all tumble by themselves by-and-by.

Falkner. I'm not going to spend the best years of my life in fighting slave-traders. I'm going to spend them — in loving you.

(*Approaching her very closely.*)

Lady J. Oh, that will be worse than the windmills — and quite as useless. (*He is very near to her.*) If you please — you remember we promised to discuss all love-matters at a distance of three feet, so as to allow for the personal equation. Your three feet, please.

Falkner. When shall we meet again?

Lady J. Ah, when? Where do you go to-morrow night, when you leave here?

Falkner. I don't know. Where do you?

Lady J. To my cousin Barbara's.

Falkner. Where is that?

Lady J. Oh, a little way along the river, towards town; not far from Staines.

Falkner. In what direction?

Lady J. About two miles to the nor'-nor'-sou'-west. I never was good at geography.

Falkner. Is there a good inn near?

Lady J. There's a delightful little riverside hotel, the Star and Garter, at Shepperford. They make a speciality of French cooking.

Falkner. I shall go there when I leave here to-morrow. May I call at your cousin's?

Lady J. It wouldn't be wise. And I'm only staying till Monday.

Falkner. And then?

Lady J. On Monday evening I go back to town.

Falkner. Alone?

Lady J. No; with Ferris, my maid. Unless I send her on first.

Falkner. And you will?

Lady J. No; I don't think so. But a curious thing happened to me the last time I stayed at Barbara's. I sent Ferris on with the luggage in the early afternoon, and I walked to the station for the sake of the walk. Well, there are two turnings, and I must have taken the wrong one.

Falkner. What happened?

Lady J. I wandered about for miles, and at half-past seven I found myself, very hot, very tired, very hungry, and in a very bad temper, at the Star and Garter at Shepperford. That was on a Monday too.

Falkner. That was on a Monday?

Lady J. Yes — hark! (*Goes suddenly to back, looks off.*) Oh, it's you, Ferris! What are you doing there?

(Ferris, *a perfectly-trained lady's maid, about thirty, dark, quiet, reserved, a little sinister-looking, appears at opening at back with wrap in hand.*)

Ferris. I beg pardon, my lady. But I thought you might be getting chilly, so I've brought you this.

Lady J. Put it on the chair.

Ferris. Yes, my lady. (*Exit.*)

Lady J. (*yawns*). Heigho! Shall we go into the billiard room? (*Going.*)

Falkner. No. How long do you mean to play with me?

Lady J. Am I playing with you?

Falkner. What else have you done the last three months? My heart is yours to its last beat. My life is yours to its last moment. What are you going to do with me?

Lady J. Ah, that's it! I'm sure I don't know. (*Smiling at him.*) What shall I do with you?

Falkner. Love me! love me! love me!

Lady J. You are very foolish!

Falkner. Foolish to love you?

Lady J. No; not foolish to love me. I like you for that. But foolish to love me so foolishly. Foolish to be always wanting to play Romeo, when I only want to play Juliet sometimes.

Falkner. Sometimes? When?

Lady J. When I am foolish too — on a Monday evening.

Falkner. Ah! will you drive me mad? Shall I tear you to pieces to find out if there is a heart somewhere within you?

Lady J. (*struggling*). Hush! some one coming. (Falkner *releases her.*)

(Sir Christopher *saunters in at back, smoking.*)

(*Exit* Lady Jessica.)

Sir C. Drop it, Ned! Drop it, my dear old boy! You're going too far.

Falkner. We won't discuss the matter, Kit.

Sir C. Yes we will, Ned. George Nepean has been making a row, and I — well, I stroked him down. I said you were the soul of honor —

Falkner. You were right. I am the soul of honor.

Sir C. And that you didn't mean anything by your attentions to Lady Jessica.

Falkner. You were wrong. I do mean something.

Sir C. Well, what?

Falkner. That's my business — and Lady Jessica's.

Sir C. You forget — I introduced you here.

Falkner. Thank you. You were very kind.

(*Going off.*)

Sir C. (*stopping him*). No, Ned; we'll have this out, here and now, please.

Falkner (*angrily*). Very well, let's have it out, here and now!

Sir C. (*with great friendship*). Come, old boy, there's no need for us to take this tone. Let's talk it over calmly, as old friends and men of the world.

Falkner. Men of the world! If there is one beast in all the loathsome fauna of civilization that I hate and despise, it is a man of the world! Good heaven, what men! what a world!

Sir C. Quite so, old fellow. It is a beastly bad world — a lying, selfish, treacherous world! A rascally bad world every way. But bad as it is, this old world hasn't lived all these thousands of years without getting a little common sense into its wicked old noddle — especially with regard to its love affairs. And, speaking as an average bad citizen of this blackguardly old world, I want to ask you, Ned Falkner, what the devil you mean by making love to a married woman, and what good or happiness you expect to get for yourself or her? Where does it lead? What's to be the end of it?

Falkner. I don't know — I don't care! I love her!

Sir C. But, my good Ned, she's another man's wife.

Falkner. She's married to a man who doesn't value her, doesn't understand her, is utterly unworthy of her.

Sir C. All women are married to men who are utterly unworthy of them — bless 'em! All women are undervalued by their husbands — bless 'em! All women are misunderstood — bless 'em again!

Falkner. Oh, don't laugh it off like that. Look at that thick clown of a husband. They haven't a single idea, or thought, or taste in common.

Sir C. That's her lookout before she married him.

Falkner. But suppose she didn't know, didn't understand. Suppose experience comes too late!

Sir C. It generally does — in other things besides marriage!

Falkner. But doesn't it make your blood boil to see a woman sacrificed for life?

Sir C. It does — my blood boils a hundred times a day. But marriages are made in heaven, and if once we set to work to repair celestial mistakes and indiscretions, we shall have our hands full. Come down to brass tacks. What's going to be the end of this?

Falkner. I don't know — I don't care! I love her!

Sir C. You don't know? I'll tell you. Let's go over all the possibilities of the case. (*Ticking them off on his fingers.*) Possibility number one — you leave off loving her —

Falkner. That's impossible.

Sir C. Possibility number two — you can, one or the other, or both of you, die by natural means; but you're both confoundedly healthy, so I'm afraid there's no chance of that. Possibility number three — you can die together by poison, or steel, or cold Thames water. I wouldn't trust *you* not to do a fool's trick of that sort; but, thank God, she's got too much sense. By the way, Ned, I don't think she cares very much for you —

Falkner. She will.

Sir C. Well, well, we shall see. Possibility number four — you can keep on dangling at her heels, and being made a fool of, without getting any — "forrarder."

Falkner. Mine is not a physical passion.

Sir C. (*looks at him for two moments*). Oh, that be hanged!

Falkner. I tell you it is not.

Sir C. Well then, it ought to be.

Falkner (*very angrily*). Well then, it is! And say no more about it. What business is it of yours?

Sir C. (*nonplussed*). Possibility number five — liaison with her husband's connivance. Gilbert Nepean won't make a mari complaisant. Dismiss that possibility.

Falkner. Dismiss them all.

Sir C. Don't you wish you could? But you'll have to face one of them, Ned. Possibility number six — a secret liaison. That's nearly impossible in society. And do you know what it means? It means in the end every inconvenience and disadvantage of marriage without any of its conveniences and advantages. It means endless discomfort, worry, and alarm. It means constant sneaking and subterfuges of the paltriest, pettiest kind. What do you say to that, my soul of honor?

Falkner. I love her. I shall not try to hide my love.

Sir C. Oh, then, you want a scandal! You'll get it! Have you thought what sort of a scandal it will be? Remember you've stuck yourself on a pedestal, and put a moral toga on. That's awkward. It wants such a lot of living up to. Gilbert Nepean is a nasty cuss and he'll make a nasty fuss. Possibility number seven, tableau one — Edward Falkner on his moral pedestal in a toga-esque attitude, honored and idolized by the British public. (*Striking a heroic attitude.*) Tableau two — a horrible scandal, a field day for Mrs. Grundy; Edward Falkner is dragged from his pedestal, his toga is torn to pieces, his splendid reputation is blown to the winds, and he is rolled in the mud under the feet of the British public who, six months ago, crowned him with garlands and shouted themselves hoarse in his praise. Are you prepared for that, my soul of honor?

Falkner. If it comes.

Sir C. (*shakes his head, makes a wry face, then proceeds*). Possibility number eight. Last remaining possibility, only possible possibility — pull yourself together, pack up your traps, start to-morrow morning for Africa or Kamtschatka, Jericho or Hong-Kong. I'll go with you. What do you say?

Falkner. No.

Sir C. No?

Falkner. I wonder at you, Deering — I wonder at you coming to lecture me on love and morality.

Sir C. Ah, why?

Falkner (*with growing indignation*). I love a woman with the deepest love of my heart, with the purest worship of my soul. If that isn't moral, if that isn't sacred, if that isn't righteous, tell me, in heaven's name, what is? And you come to lecture me with your cut and dried worldly-wise philosophy, your mean little maxims, you come to lecture me on love and morality — you!

Sir C. Yes, I do! I may have had my attachments, I may have done this, that, and the other. I'm not a hero, I'm not on a pedestal, I never put on a moral toga. But I owe no woman a sigh or a sixpence. I've never wronged any man's sister, or daughter, or wife. And I tell you this, Ned Falkner, you're a fool if you think that anything can come of this passion of yours for Lady Jessica, except misery and ruin for her, embarrassment and disgrace for you, and kicking out of decent society for both of you.

Falkner (*very firmly*). Very well. And will you please be the first to cut me. Or shall I cut you?

Sir C. You mean that, Ned?

Falkner. Yes; if I'm a fool, leave me to my folly. (*Very strongly.*) Don't meddle with me.

Sir C. You do mean that, Ned? Our friendship is to end?

Falkner. Yes.

Sir C. Very well. You'll understand some day, Ned, that I couldn't see an old comrade, a man who stood shoulder to shoulder with me all these years — you'll understand I couldn't see him fling away honor, happiness, reputation, future, everything, without saying one word and trying to pull him up. Good-bye, old chap. (*Going off.*)

(Falkner *springs up generously, goes to him warmly, holding out both hands.*)

Falkner (*cries out*). Kit!

Sir C. Ned!

(*The two men stand with hands clasped for some time, then* Falkner *speaks in a soft, low, broken voice.*)

Falkner. I love her, Kit — you don't know how much. When I see her, that turn of her head, that little toss of her curls, the little roguish face she makes — God couldn't make her like that and then blame a man for loving her! If He did — well, right or wrong, I'd rather miss heaven than one smile, one nod, one touch of her finger-tips!

Sir C. Oh, my poor dear old fellow, if you're as far gone as that, what the deuce am I to do with you?

(*Enter* Beatrice Ebernoe, *a tall, dark woman, about thirty, very beautiful and spirituelle.*)

Bea. Ned, here's a messenger from the Colonial Office with a very urgent letter for you.

Falkner. For me?

(*Enter Servant bringing letter to* Falkner.)

Serv. Important, sir. The messenger is waiting in the hall for your answer.

Falkner (*taking letter*). Very well, I'll come to him. (*Exit Servant.*)

Falkner (*reading letter*). More trouble out there. They want me to go out at once and negotiate. They think I could win over the chiefs and save a lot of bloodshed.

Sir C. You'll go, Ned?

Falkner. I don't know.

Sir C. (*to* Beatrice). Help me to persuade him.

Bea. Can I? Have I any influence? Ned, for the sake of old days —

Falkner. Ah, no — let me be — I must think this over.

(*Exit with distracted manner.*)

Bea. Have you spoken to him?

Sir C. Yes; I gave him a thorough good slanging. Not a bit of use. When one of you holds us by a single hair, not all the king's horses and all the king's men can drag us back to that beggarly dusty old tow-path of duty.

Bea. I won't believe men are so weak.

Sir C. Aren't we? There never was so sensible a man as I am in the management of other men's love affairs. You should have heard me lecture Ned. But once put me near you, and I'm every bit as bad as that poor fool I've been basting!

(*Indicating* Falkner *by inclination of the head towards the direction he has gone.*)

Bea. Oh, no, Kit, I won't have you say that.

Sir C. But I am. How beautifully you played just now.

Bea. Did I?

Sir C. Don't do it again.

Bea. Why not?

Sir C. It's taking an unfair advantage of me. You oughtn't to rouse those divine feelings in a man's heart. You oughtn't to make me feel like a martyr, or a king, or a saint in a cathedral window, with all heaven's sunlight streaming through me! You oughtn't to do it! Because devil a ha'porth of a king, or a martyr, or a saint is there in me — and after you've been playing to me and lifted me into that seventh heaven of yours, I feel so mean and shabby when I drop down to earth again, and find myself a hard, selfish man of the world.

Bea. Oh, I think there's a great deal of the martyr and saint and king in you.

Sir C. Do you? I believe there is! I know there would be if you'd only screw me up to it — and keep me screwed up. Beatrice. there's nothing I couldn't do if you would only —

Bea. (*going away from him*). Kit, you mustn't speak of this again. I can't quite forget.

Sir C. There's no need. While he was alive I never had one disloyal thought towards him. Now he's dead; who could be so fitted to take care of his dearest treasure as his oldest friend?

Bea. (*going away*). I can't quite forget.

Sir C. But you're young. What do you mean to do with your life?

Bea. I'd some thoughts of entering a sisterhood.

Sir C. Ah, no! Surely there are plenty of dear good ugly women in the world who can do that.

Bea. But I must enjoy the luxury of self-sacrifice. Tell me how I can drink the deepest of that cup.

Sir C. Marry me. I'll give you the most splendid opportunities. Now, if you and I were to join our forces, and take our poor Ned in hand, and —

Bea. Hush!

(Falkner *re-enters, evidently very much distracted.*)

Sir C. (*after a little pause, goes up to him*). Well, Ned, what are you going to do?

Falkner (*in an agony of indecision*). I don't know! I don't know!

Sir C. You'll go, Ned? I'll go with you!

(*Enter* Lady Jessica *at back.*)

Bea. You'll go, Ned?

Lady J. Go? Where?

Falkner. Nowhere. I shan't go, Kit. The man's waiting. I must give him my answer.

(*Exit.* Lady Jessica *looks after him.* Sir Christopher *shrugs his shoulders at* Beatrice.)

Sir C. Not all the king's horses, nor all the King's men.

CURTAIN.
(*Time — 38 minutes.*)

ACT II

Scene: — *Private sitting-room in the Star and Garter, Shepperford-on-Thames, a room in a small high-class riverside hotel, furnished in the usual incongruous hotel fashion. Large French windows both right and left take up a good part of the back of the stage, and open upon a veranda which runs along outside. The pillars and roof of the veranda are smothered with trails of flowers and creeping plants. Beyond the veranda and very near to it is the Thames with opposite bank. Door down stage right. A sofa down stage right. A sideboard left. On the sideboard, plates, knives, forks, etc., dishes of fine peaches, grapes and strawberries, and a bottle each of hock, claret and champagne, as described in the text. A small table with writing materials at back between windows. A small table with white cloth laid, down stage, a little to the left of centre. A fireplace down stage left.*

(*Discover* Falkner *in evening dress and French Waiter.*)

Falkner. Crême à la Reine. We might have some trifle before the soup.

Waiter. Anchovy salad? Caviare?

Falkner. Caviare.

Waiter. Bien, m'sieu. At what hour will m'sieu dine?

Falkner. I don't know; I'm not sure that my friend will come at all. But tell the cook to have everything prepared, so that we can have dinner very soon after my friend arrives.

Waiter. Bien, m'sieu.

Falkner (*reading menu*). Caviare. Crême à la Reine. Rouget à l'Italienne. Whitebait. Petites Timbales à la Lucullus. Mousse de Foies Gras en Belle Vue. Is your cook equal to those entrées?

Waiter. Oh, sir, he is equal to anything. Trust to me, sir. The cook shall be magnifique. The dinner shall be magnifique.

Falkner (*continuing*). Poulardes poêlees, sauce Arcadienne. Selle de Mouton. Ortolans. Salade. Asperges en Branches.

Pouding Mousseline, sauce Eglantine. Soufflé Glacé a l'Ananas. Dessert. (*Waiter points to the dessert on the sideboard.*) And the wines?

Waiter (*pointing to the wines on the sideboard*). Ayala, seventy-five. Johannesburg, sixty-eight. Château Haut-Brion, seventy-five. I have brought them from London myself. We have not these vintages here.

Falkner. Good.

Waiter. It is but one friend that m'sieu expect?

Falkner. Only one friend.

Waiter. Bien, m'sieu. (*Exit.*)

(Falkner *alone walks restlessly about the room for a few seconds, comes down; is arrested by something he hears outside the door, shows great delight.*)

(*Re-enter Waiter.*)

Waiter. A lady; she say will Mr. Falkner please to see her? She have lost (*coughing*) her way.

Falkner. Show her in.

(Falkner *alone walks eagerly about room for a few seconds; his manner very eager and impatient and quite different from what it had been before.*)

(*Re-enter Waiter, showing in* Lady Jessica *most charmingly and coquettishly dressed in summer outdoor clothes. She comes in rather tempestuously, speaking as she enters, and going up to* Falkner.)

Lady J. (*all in a breath*). Oh, my dear Mr. Falkner, I've been staying with my cousin, and I was walking to the station, and by some unlucky chance I must have taken the wrong turning, for instead of finding myself at the station, I found myself here; and as I'm very hungry, would you think it very dreadful if I asked you to give me just a mere mouthful of dinner?

Falkner (*intensely calm low voice*). I'm delighted. (*To Waiter.*) Will you let us have dinner as soon as it is ready?

Waiter. In half an hour, sir. And the friend, sir?

Falkner. The friend?

Waiter. The friend that m'sieu expect — the friend of the dinner?

Falkner. Oh, yes — if he comes, show him in.

Lady J. (*alarmed*). You don't expect —

Falkner (*glancing at Waiter*). Hush!

Waiter (*absolutely impassive face*). Bien, m'sieu!

(*Exit.*)

Falkner. I'm so glad you've come. Look. (*Holding out his hand.*) I'm trembling with delight. I knew you would be here.

Lady J. I'm sure you didn't, for I didn't know myself two hours ago. It was only by chance that I happened to take the wrong turning.

Falkner. No; the right turning. And not by chance. It was not chance that brought you to me.

Lady J. Oh, please, not that strain. I can't play up to it. Sit down and let us discuss something mundane — say dinner.

Falkner (*giving her the menu*). I hope you'll like what I've ordered. I sent the waiter up to London for some of the dishes and the wines.

Lady J. (*takes menu, looks at it, shows symptoms of great mock terror*). What? You surely don't expect my poor little appetite to stand up to this dinner. Oh, let me be a warning to all, never to take the wrong turning when it may lead to a menu like this.

Falkner. That's for your choice. You don't suppose I'd offer you anything but the very best.

Lady J. Yes, but a little of the very best is all I want; not all of it.

Falkner. Take all of it that I can set before you.

Lady J. Oh, but think — there may be other deserving ladies in the world.

Falkner. There is but you.

Lady J. (*looks at him very much amused*). And I came here to cure you of this folly. Ah, me! (*Reading the menu.*) Mousse de Foies Gras. Poulardes poêlèes, sauce Arcadienne — what is sauce Arcadienne?

Falkner. I don't know. Love is the sauce of life. Perhaps it's that.

Lady J. Yes, but don't dish it up too often or too strong. It's sure to be wasted.

Falkner. My love for you is not wasted.

Lady J. No?

Falkner. You'll return it. You'll love me at last.

Lady J. Shall I? Crême à la Reine. Roguet à l'Italienne. And if I did what then?

Falkner. Join your life to mine. Come to Africa with me.

Lady J. (*shakes her head*). Impossible! We should only shock the British public. They wouldn't understand us. Ortolans. Salade. Asperges en Branches. Besides, what would everybody say?

Falkner. We shouldn't hear them.

Lady J. No; but they'd be talking all the same. Ha, ha! They'd call us the eloping philanthropists.

Falkner. Would that matter?

Lady J. Oh, yes. A philanthropist may not elope. A tenor may. Doesn't it show the terrible irony there is in the heart of things, that the best meaning philanthropist in the world may not elope with his neighbor's wife? Pouding Mousseline, sauce Eglantine. What makes you so eager to go hunting slave-traders in Africa?

Falkner. My father spent half his fortune putting slavery down. My grandfather spent half his life and died a pauper for the same cause.

Lady J. Well then, you should send a subscription to the Aborigines' Protection Society. That is how I keep up our family traditions.

Falkner. How?

Lady J. My father had a shocking reputation, and my grandfather, Beau Lillywhite — Oh! (*Shrug.*) So I follow in their footsteps — at a respectful distance. I flirt with you. Soufflé Glacé à l'Ananas. There's no flirting in Central Africa, I suppose?

Falkner. No flirting. Only heat and hunger and thirst, and helpless misery prolonged to a horrible death.

Lady J. (*genuinely moved*). Oh, I'm so sorry! Don't think me heartless about *that*. Perhaps if I had lived amongst it as you have —

Falkner. Ah, if you had! you'd do as I ask you. You'd give all your heart to me, you'd give all your woman's care and tenderness to them, and you'd never hear one whisper of what people said of you.

Lady J. (*looking at him with real admiration*). How earnest you are! How devoted!

(*Enter Waiter with knives and forks; he goes to table and begins laying it.*)

Lady J. (*to waiter*). What is sauce Arcadienne?

Waiter. Pardon! The cook is splendid. He is magnifique — but he has (*gesture*) renversée the sauce Arcadienne all over the shop.

Falkner. It doesn't matter.

Lady J. Oh, I had set my heart on sauce Arcadienne.

Falkner. The cook must make some more sauce Arcadienne.

Waiter. Ah, that is impossible till the middle of the night.

Lady J. Ah, what a pity! It is the one thing I long for, sauce Arcadienne.

Falkner. Why?

Lady J. Because I don't know what it is.

Waiter. He will give you some sauce Marguerite.

Lady J. What is sauce Marguerite?

Waiter (*all the while laying table*). Ah, it is delicieuse. It is the very best sauce that is in all the world.

Lady J. Va pour la sauce Marguerite! Oh, this dinner!

Waiter. Ah, there is the beast of the organ man.

Lady J. No, let him be. I like music — and monkeys. (*To* Falkner.) Tell them to make haste.

Falkner. Hurry the dinner.

Waiter. Bien!

(*Exit.*)

Lady J. (*taking out watch*). Half-past seven, I've not an hour to stay.

Falkner. Yes, your life if you will.

LADY J. Ah, no! You must be sensible. Think! what could come of it if I did love you? I should only break your heart or — what would be far worse — break my own.

FALKNER. Break it then — or let me break it. It's better to feel, it's better to suffer, than to be meanly happy. I love you, but I'd rather smother you in tears and blood than you should go on living this poor little heartless, withered life, choked up with all this dry society dust. Oh, can't I make you feel? Can't I make you live? Can't I make you love me?

LADY J. (*after a moment's pause, looking at him with great admiration*). Perhaps I do in my heart of hearts!

FALKNER. Ah!

(*Springs to seize her; she struggles with him.*)

LADY J. Mr. Falkner! Mr. Falkner! If you please. Do you hear? Mr. Falkner! (*Tears herself free.*) Will you please go and stop that horrid organ? Will you, please?

(FALKNER *bows, exit at door.* LADY JESSICA *panting, flurried, out of breath, goes up to the window fanning herself with handkerchief, passes on to veranda, stays there for a few moments fanning herself, suddenly starts back alarmed, comes into room, stands frightened, listening.* GEORGE NEPEAN *appears on veranda, comes up to window, looks in.*)

LADY J. (*trying to appear indifferent*). Ah, George!

GEORGE. I thought I caught sight of you. May I come in?

LADY J. Certainly.

GEORGE (*entering*). I'm not intruding?

LADY J. Intruding? Oh, no. Have you heard from Gilbert?

GEORGE. Yes, I had a letter this morning. He may be back in two or three days.

LADY J. (*embarrassed*). Yes?

(*A pause. The organ outside stops in the middle of a bar.*)

GEORGE (*glancing at table*). You're dining here?

LADY J. Yes; just a small party. What brings you here?

GEORGE. I was going on to some friends at Hersham. I was waiting for the ferry when I caught sight of you. (*Glancing at table and sideboard.*) You're giving your friends rather a good dinner.

LADY J. H'm, rather. I've heard the cooking's very good here. (*A little pause.*) There's a nest of cygnets outside. Have you seen them?

GEORGE. No.

LADY J. Do come and look at them; they are so pretty.

(*Going off at window followed by* GEORGE *when* FALKNER *enters at door. The two men look at each other.* LADY JESSICA *shows very great confusion and embarrassment. A long awkward pause.* GEORGE *looks very significantly at the sideboard and table.*)

GEORGE (*to* LADY JESSICA). Gilbert must know of this. You understand?

(*Bows. Exit by window and veranda.*)

LADY J. (*who has stood very frightened and confused*). Did you hear? What can I do? What can I do?

FALKNER (*calm, almost triumphant*). You must join your life to mine now.

LADY J. No, no! If you wish me ever to have one kind thought of you, get me out of this! Do something, find somebody to dine with us. Understand me, I know myself, if this leads to a scandal, I shall hate you in a week. Oh, do something! do something!

FALKNER. Be calm. Be sure I'll do all I can to save you from a scandal. If that is impossible, be sure I'll do all I can to protect you from it.

LADY J. Ah, no! Save me from it. I can't face it. I can't give up my world, my friends. Oh, what can I do? I'll go back to town —

FALKNER. What good will that do? You had far better stay now. Sit down, be calm. Trust to me.

LADY J. Oh, you are good, and I'm such a coward.

Falkner. Let us think what is the best thing to do.

Lady J. Can't we get somebody to dine with us?

Lady R. (*heard outside*). Oh, can't you wait, Freddie?

Lady J. (*looking off*). Hark! Rosy! (*Goes up to window.*)

Freddie (*heard off*). What! Row two more miles without a drink?

Lady J. She's there in a boat with Freddie and another man. The men are landing. If we could only get them to stay and dine with us! We must! Go and find George Nepean and bring him back here. Make haste. When you come back, I'll have Rosy here.

Falkner. In any case rely on me. I'm as firm as the earth beneath you. (*Exit.*)

Lady J. (*goes up to window*). Rosy! Rosy! Come here! Yes, through there. Shush!

(Lady Rosamund *appears in the veranda.*)

Lady R. (*entering room*). Jess! What's the matter?

Lady J. Everything. You and Freddie must stay and dine here.

Lady R. We can't, we're going on to dine with Mrs. Crespin at her new place, and we've got Jack Symons with us.

Lady J. Va pour Jack Symons, whoever he may be! He must stay and dine too!

Lady R. Impossible. Mrs. Crespin has asked some people to meet us. As her place is on the river Jack proposed we should row down and dress there. What are you doing here? I thought you were at Barbara's.

Lady J. I was going back to town to-night. I thought I'd walk to the station — it's so delightful across the fields. Well, you know the path, I went on all right till I came to those two turnings, and then — I must have taken the wrong one, for, instead of finding myself at the station, I found myself here.

Lady R. Well?

Lady J. I'd been wandering about for over an hour, I was very hungry; I remembered Mr. Falkner was staying here; so I came in and asked him to give me some dinner.

Lady R. It was very foolish of you!

Lady J. Yes, especially as George Nepean was waiting for the ferry and caught sight of me on the veranda.

Lady R. George Nepean!

Lady J. He came in, saw Mr. Falkner, put a totally wrong construction on it all, and threatened to let Gilbert know.

Lady R. How could you be so imprudent, Jess? You must have known that —

Lady J. Oh, don't stand there rowing me. Help me out of this and I promise you I won't get into another.

Lady R. Why didn't you explain to George how it happened?

Lady J. So I would. Only when he came in I was alone. I felt sure he would put a wrong construction on it, so I told him I was dining here with a little party — then Mr. Falkner came in, and I was too confused to say anything. Besides, I couldn't very well tell him the truth, because —

Lady R. Because what?

Lady J. Well, it's very curious, but the last time I was staying with Barbara the very same thing happened.

Lady R. What?

Lady J. I was walking to the station, and I must have taken the wrong turning, for, instead of finding myself at the station, I found myself here.

Lady R. What, twice?

Lady J. Yes.

Lady R. Oh, impossible!

Lady J. No, it isn't; for it actually happened.

Lady R. Do you mean to tell me that you —

Lady J. (*taking her up on the "tell"*). Yes, I do. The sign-post is most deceptive.

Lady R. It must be.

Lady J. But the other time it was really a mistake, and I dined here all alone.

Lady R. Honor?

Lady J. Really, really honor!

Lady R. I cannot imagine how you, a woman of the world —

Lady J. Oh, do not nag me. Mr. Falkner has gone for George. You must stay here and tell George you are dining with me.

Lady R. What about Freddie and Jack? See if they've come back to the boat.

Lady J. (*looking off at window*). Not yet. Here's Mr. Falkner — alone.

(*Re-enter* Falkner *at window.*)

Well, where is he?

Falkner (*to* Lady Rosamund). How d'ye do? (*To* Lady Jessica.) He took a fly that was waiting outside and drove to the post-office. I went there and made inquiries. He stopped, sent off a telegram —

Lady J. That must have been to Gilbert.

Falkner. Then he drove off towards Staines. Shall I follow him?

Lady J. Yes. No. What's the use? He may be anywhere by this.

Lady R. Besides, we can't stay to dinner.

Lady J. You must — you must! I must be able to tell Gilbert that somebody dined with me.

Lady R. Jess, I'll write to George when I get back to-night, and tell him that I dined with you here.

Lady J. Oh, you good creature! No! Write now, on the hotel paper. Then he'll see you were actually here.

Lady R. Pens, ink, and paper.

Falkner (*at table up stage*). Here!

(Lady Rosamund *goes up* r. c.)

Lady J. Rosy, I've got a better plan than that.

Lady R. What?

Lady J. Could you be in town to-morrow morning?

Lady R. Yes — why?

Lady J. Write to George to call on you there. I'll drop in a little before he comes. Then we can see what frame of mind he is in, and explain things accordingly. We can manage him so much better between us.

Lady R. Very well, make haste. Mr. Falkner, will you go into the bar, run up against my husband and his friend, and keep them busy there till I get back into the boat?

Falkner. Very well. (*Exit.*)

Lady R. Now, what shall I say?

Lady J. (*dictating*). "My dear George" —

Lady R. (*writing*). "My dear George" — Oh, this pen!

(*Throws away the pen, takes up another, tries it.*)

Lady J. We must make it very short and casual as if you didn't attach much importance to it.

Lady R. (*throws away second pen*). That's as bad!

Lady J. (*taking out a gold stylograph, giving it to* Lady Rosamund). Here's my stylograph. Take care of it. It was a birthday present.

Lady R. "Monday evening. My dear George" — (*Dictating.*) "Jess has told me that you have just been here and that you were surprised at her presence. She fears you may have put a wrong construction on what you saw. She was too flurried at the moment to explain. But if you will call on me to-morrow morning, at Cadogan Gardens at" — what time will suit you?

Lady R. Twelve?

Lady J. Yes, and I'll be there a few minutes before.

Lady R. (*writing*). "Twelve."

Lady J. (*dictating*). "I will give you a full explanation. You will then see how very simple the whole affair was, and how little cause you had for your suspicions of her." That will do, won't it?

Lady R. Yes, I think. "Yours sincerely" — no, "Yours affectionately, Rosy."

Lady J. "P.S. You had perhaps better say nothing about this to Gilbert until after we have met. When you see how trifling the matter is, you can tell Gilbert or not, as you please."

Lady R. (*writing*). "As you please. George Nepean, Esquire." What's his number?

Lady J. Two-twenty.

Lady R. (*writing*). "Two-twenty, Sloane Street."

Lady J. What about Freddie? Shall we tell him?

Lady R. Oh, no! I wouldn't trust my Freddie in a matter of this kind. He'd put a wrong construction on it — men always do.

(*Puts letter in envelope, seals it.*)

Lady J. But if George asks him?

Lady R. Freddie won't come up to town to-morrow. We'll see how George takes it, and we'll keep Freddie out of it, if we can. (*She has risen, leaving stylograph on writing-table, where it remains. She seals letter.*) Stamp?

Lady J. I've got one in my purse.

Lady R. (*has caught sight of the menu, has taken it up*). Jess, you'll go straight to the station now?

Lady J. Yes, I'm awfully hungry —

Lady R. Yes, but I don't think this dinner would agree with you.

(*Puts the menu down significantly.*)

Lady J. Very well. But I am hungry.

Lady R. And Jess, if I get you out of this — you won't take the wrong turning again?

Lady J. No! no!

Lady R. Honor?

Lady J. Honor! Really honor! Rosy, you know this is only a silly freak — nothing more.

Lady R. I may be sure of that, Jess? Honor?

Lady J. Honor! Really, really honor!

Lady R. (*kisses her*). I must be going. To-morrow!

Lady J. To-morrow at Cadogan Gardens, ten minutes to twelve.

Lady R. (*at window*). Those men are in the boat. My Freddie is looking for me. What shall I tell him?

(*Exit at window.*)

(*Enter Waiter.*)

Lady J. (*giving letter*). Please get that posted at once.

Waiter (*taking letter*). Bien, madame.

(*Exit with letter.*)

(*Re-enter* Falkner *at window.*)

Lady J. They've gone?

Falkner. Yes. What have you done?

Lady J. Rosy has written to George to come and see her to-morrow morning at Cadogan Gardens. You had better come too.

Falkner. At what time?

Lady J. Say a quarter to one. George will have gone by then and we can tell you if he accepts our explanation.

Falkner. What is the explanation to be?

Lady J. That Rosy and I were dining together here, that she hadn't arrived, that you happened to come into the room, and that George saw you and put a wrong construction on it. That will be all right, won't it?

Falkner. Yes — I daresay. I wish it had been possible to tell the truth.

Lady J. The truth? What truth? Rosy was actually here, and she *might* have stayed and dined with me — only she didn't — and — well, if it isn't the truth, it's only a little one.

Falkner. I think those things are all the same size.

Lady J. Oh, please don't be disagreeable, just at our last moment too.

Falkner. Our last moment! Ah, no, no, no! (*Approaching her.*)

Lady J. Ah, yes, yes, yes! I promised Rosy I'd go straight to the station —

Falkner. There's no train till eight fifty. What harm can there be in your staying to dinner now?

Lady J. I promised Rosy I wouldn't. I'm fearfully hungry —

(*Enter Waiter with letter on salver.*)

Waiter (*advancing with letter on salver to* Lady Jessica). Pardon, is this letter for madame?

Lady J. (*takes letter, shows fright*). Yes. Excuse me. Who brought it?

(*Opens letter, takes out telegram.*)

Waiter. She is here in the passage.

Lady J. (*opens telegram; shows great alarm. Calls*). Ferris.

Ferris (*coming to door*). Yes, my lady.

Lady J. Come in.

Waiter. Bien, madame.

(*Exit.*)

Lady J. When did this telegram come?

Ferris. This afternoon, my lady. The

moment I got in, Mr. Rawlins said to me, "Mr. Nepean is coming back to-night; I've just had a telegram from him to get his room ready. And I expect this telegram is for her ladyship," he said, and he gave me that telegram, and I said, "I expect it is." "What time will her ladyship be back to-night?" he said. "I don't know," I said. "Where is her ladyship now?" he said. "I don't know," I said.

Lady J. You didn't know?

Ferris. No, my lady.

Lady J. Then why did you come here?

Ferris (*confused*). The other night when I was bringing your ladyship's shawl to the tent, I happened to hear you mention this hotel. I didn't think anything of it, your ladyship, and I didn't in the least expect to find you here, I assure your ladyship. But I thought your ladyship would like to be apprised that Mr. Nepean was coming home to-night, and so I came, as I may say by pure chance, my lady; just as you might have come yourself, my lady.

Lady J. Quite right, Ferris. (*To* Falkner.) Mr. Nepean is coming home to-night. He reaches Paddington at ten.

Ferris. I've got a cab outside, my lady, and I've looked out the trains. If we make haste, we can drive over to Walton and just catch a train there. But we haven't a moment to spare.

Lady J. Come then.

Ferris. I hope I've done right, my lady?

Lady J. Quite right, Ferris. No. Please don't trouble to come out, I'd rather you didn't. Rosy and I will dine with you some other night. (*Exit* Ferris.) Good-night.

Falkner. And to-morrow?

Lady J. To-morrow? (*Grimace.*) Petits rows conjugals sauce tartare.

(*Exit at door.*)

(*Enter Waiter with two little morsels of Caviare.*)

Falkner. What's that?

Waiter. Caviare on toast, sir.

Falkner. Hang the caviare. Bring in the soup.

Waiter. Ah, it is not yet ready, two, three minutes. I am very sorry, but the cook say the sauce Marguerite —

Falkner. What about it?

Waiter. It will not be made.

Falkner. Very well.

Waiter. And the salade?

Falkner. What about the salad?

Waiter. Will m'sieu mix it?

Falkner. No; mix it yourself.

Waiter. Bien, m'sieu.

Falkner. Waiter!

Waiter. Sir!

Falkner (*pointing to the cover laid for* Lady Jessica). Take those confounded things away.

Waiter. Sir!

Falkner. Take those confounded things away; I'm going to dine alone.

Waiter. Bien, m'sieu.

(*Takes up the things, the second cover, and the one plate of caviare, leaving the other on the table in* Falkner's *place. Is going off with them.*)

Falkner. Bring in the soup.

Waiter. Bien, m'sieu.

(*Exit with things.* Sir Christopher's *voice heard outside.*)

Sir C. Mr. Falkner?

Waiter. Yes, sir. In number ten, sir.

Sir C. Has he dined?

Waiter. Not yet, sir. What name, sir?

Sir C. Oh never mind my name. Show me in.

Waiter (*at door, announcing*). The friend of the dinner.

(*Enter* Sir Christopher *in morning dress.*)

(*Exit Waiter.*)

Sir C. (*very cordially*). Ah, dear old boy, here you are. (*Shaking hands cordially.*) All alone?

Falkner (*very sulky*). Yes.

Sir C. (*looking at table*). You haven't dined?

Falkner. No.

Sir C. That's all right. I'll join you. What's the matter?

Falkner. Nothing.

Sir C. Nothing?

Falkner (*very sulky throughout*). No. What should be?

Sir C. You look upset.

Falkner. Not at all.

Sir C. That's all right. (*Going up to table very ravenously.*) I say, old chap, dinner won't be long, eh?

Falkner. No, why?

Sir C. I'm famished. I was over at Hounslow, I had no end of work to get through, so I stuck to it. I've had nothing but a biscuit and a glass of sherry since breakfast. I was going up to town for dinner, then I remembered you wrote to me from here; so I thought I'd run over on the chance of finding you. And here you are. (*Cordially.*) Well, how are you?

Falkner. I'm very well.

Sir C. That's all right. And, and — old fellow — about the lady?

Falkner. What about her?

Sir C. You're going to behave like a good true fellow and give her up, eh?

Falkner. Yes, I suppose.

Sir C. That's all right. Love 'em, worship 'em, make the most of 'em! Go down on your knees every day and thank God for having sent them into this dreary world for our good and comfort. But, don't break your heart over 'em! Don't ruin your career for 'em! Don't lose a night's rest for 'em! They're not worth it — except one!

(*Very softly.*)

Falkner (*same sulky mood*). You're full of good advice.

Sir C. It's the only thing I am full of. I say, old fellow, could you hurry them up with the dinner?

(Falkner *goes and rings bell.*)

Sir C. (*casually taking up the menu*). No, Ned; they're not worth it, bless their hearts. And the man who — (*Suddenly stops, his face illuminated with delighted surprise.*) Ned!

Falkner. What?

Sir C. (*pointing to menu*). This isn't the menu for to-night?

Falkner. Yes.

Sir C. (*incredulously*). No! Dear old fellow! (*Looking at him with great admiration.*) Dear old fellow! I say, Ned, you do yourself very well when you're all alone.

Falkner. Why shouldn't I?

Sir C. Why shouldn't you? Why shouldn't you? (*Perusing menu.*)

Falkner. Why shouldn't I? Excuse me a moment.

(*Exit at door.* Sir Christopher, *left alone, reads over the menu, showing great satisfaction, then goes up to sideboard, takes up the bottles of wine, looks at them, shows great satisfaction, rubs his hands, brings down champagne, places it* r. *of table, ditto hock, places it* l. *of table, brings down claret, looks at brand, hugs it delightedly; sits on table up* c., *puts claret down, picks up stylo. pen, reads inscription, coming down, then goes to window* l. c., *looks off, gives a sigh, comes down, puts pen in waistcoat pocket. Enter Waiter.*)

Waiter (*putting soup on table*). Mr. Falkner says will you please excuse him? He has gone to London just now, this minute.

Sir C. Gone to London!

Waiter. On very important business. He say will you please make yourself at home with the dinner?

Sir C. (*puzzled*). Gone to London! What on earth — (*Resolutely and instantly takes seat at head of table.*) Serve up the dinner! Sharp!

Waiter. Caviare on toast?

Sir C. Oh, damn the caviare! Open the champagne!

(*Takes the morsel of caviare and throws it down his throat; helps himself to soup, peppers it vigorously, meantime Waiter opens champagne and pours out a glass.*)

Sir C. The fish! Quick! and the entrées, bring them both up at the same time — bring up the whole bag of tricks!!

(Sir Christopher *throws spoonful after spoonful of soup down his throat. The organ outside strikes up in the middle of the bar* *at which it left off, a very rowdy street tune.)*

CURTAIN.
(*Time — 24 minutes.*)

ACT III

SCENE: LADY ROSAMUND'S *drawing-room, Cadogan Gardens, a very elegant modern apartment, furnished in good taste. Door at back. Door right. Large bow window forming an alcove up stage right. Fireplace left.*

(LADY ROSAMUND *discovered in out-door morning dress. Footman showing in* LADY JESSICA *at back.*)

FOOTMAN (*announces*). Lady Jessica Nepean.

(*Exit Footman.*)

LADY R. Well, dear?

LADY J. (*kisses* LADY ROSAMUND *very affectionately*). Oh, Rosy —

LADY R. What's the matter?

LADY J. Directly you had gone Ferris came in with a telegram from Gilbert, saying he was coming home last night. Of course I flew back to town. When I got there I found a later telegram saying he hadn't been able to finish his business, and that he would come back to-day.

LADY R. (*taking letter from pocket*). He reaches Paddington at twelve.

LADY J. How do you know?

LADY R. (*giving letter*). Read that.

LADY J. (*looking at handwriting*). From George Nepean.

LADY R. Yes. He came here an hour ago to see me, and left that note. I'm afraid George means to be very horrid.

LADY J. (*reading*). "Dear Lady Rosamund, I shall, of course, be quite ready to listen to any explanation you may have to offer. I will come back to Cadogan Gardens on my return from Paddington. I am now on my way there to meet Gilbert, who arrives from Devon at twelve. It is only fair to tell you that on leaving Lady Jessica last evening I telegraphed him I had a most serious communication to make to him, and that on his arrival I shall tell him exactly what I saw." George does mean to be horrid. (*Retaining letter.*)

LADY R. I cannot imagine how you —

LADY J. Oh, do not preach. I tell you it was the signpost. It is most deceptive.

LADY R. It must be. The next time you come to that signpost —

LADY J. I shall know which turning to take! You needn't fear.

LADY R. My Freddie's in a small fever.

LADY J. What about?

LADY R. My coming up to town this morning.

LADY J. You're sure he'll stay down there? He won't come up and — interfere?

LADY R. Oh no, poor old dear! I snubbed him thoroughly and left him grizzling in his tent, like Achilles. He'll stay there all day, fuming and trying to screw up his courage to have a tremendous row with me when I get back to dinner this evening. I know my Freddie so well!

(FREDDIE *saunters in at back, half timid, half defiant.*)

(*Looking at him with amused surprise.*) Hillo, my friend! Hillo!

FREDDIE (*very severe and dignified, takes no notice of her*). How do, Jess?

(LADY JESSICA *alternately reads* GEORGE'S *letter and looks at* FREDDIE.)

LADY R. What has brought you to town?

FREDDIE. I came up with a purpose.

LADY R. Oh, don't say that. People are always so horrid who do things with a purpose.

FREDDIE. I came up with Mrs. Crespin. She has lost the address of the cook that you gave her last evening. I told her you were in town. She will call here for it.

LADY R. (*sweetly*). Very well.

FREDDIE. Do you intend to stay in, or go out this morning?

LADY R. That depends. I may stay in — or I may go out. What are you going to do?

FREDDIE. That depends. I may stay in — or — I may go out.

LADY R. Very well, dear, do as you

please. I'll take the alternative. (*To* Lady Jessica.) Come and take your things off in my room.

Lady J. (*glancing at* Freddie). But don't you think —

Freddie (*with great dignity*). I have come up to town this morning, because for the future I intend to place everything in this house on a new basis, an entirely opposite basis from that on which it now stands.

Lady R. You're going to turn all the furniture upside down! Oh, I wouldn't!

Freddie. Hitherto I have been content to be a cipher in this establishment. I will be a cipher no longer.

Lady R. No, I wouldn't. Come along, Jess!

Lady J. But —

Lady R. We'll talk it over upstairs. Run away to your club, Freddie, and think over what figure you would like to be. I daresay we can arrange it.

(*Exit* Lady Rosamund, r., *taking off* Lady Jessica, *and closing the door rather sharply behind her.*)

Freddie (*left alone, marches up to the door, calls out in a forcible-feeble scream*). I will not be a cipher! I will not be a cipher! (*Comes to centre of stage, gesticulates, his lips moving, sits down very resolutely, and then says in a tone of solemn conviction*). I will *not* be a cipher!

(*Enter Footman announcing.*)

Footman. Sir Christopher Deering!

(*Enter* Sir Christopher.)

(*Exit Footman.*)

Sir C. (*shaking hands*). I've just come on from Lady Jessica's. They told me I should find her here.

Freddie. She's upstairs with my wife.

Sir C. Can I see her for a few minutes?

Freddie. I don't know. Deering, old fellow, we're tiled in, aren't we? If I ask your advice —

Sir C. Certainly, Freddie. What is it?

Freddie. I've been married for seven years —

Sir C. Seven years is it? It doesn't seem so long.

Freddie. Oh, doesn't it? Yes, it does. Rosy and I have never quite hit it off from the first.

Sir C. No? How's that?

Freddie. I don't know. When I want to do anything, she doesn't. When I want to go anywhere she won't. When I like anybody, she hates them. And when I hate anybody, she likes them. And — well — there it is in a nutshell.

Sir C. Hum! I should humor her a little, Freddie — let her have her own way. Try kindness.

Freddie. Kindness? I tell you this, Deering, kindness is a grand mistake. And I made that grand mistake at starting. I began with riding her on the snaffle. I ought to have started on the curb, eh?

Sir C. Well, there's something to be said for that method in some cases. Kindness won't do, you say? Why not try firmness?

Freddie. I have.

Sir C. Well?

Freddie. Well, firmness is all very well, but there's one great objection to firmness.

Sir C. What's that?

Freddie. It leads to such awful rows, and chronic rowing does upset me so. After about two days of it, I feel so seedy and shaky and nervous, I don't know what to do. (*Has a sudden wrathful outburst.*) And she comes up as smiling as ever!

Sir C. Poor old fellow!

Freddie. I say, Deering, what would you advise me to do?

Sir C. Well, it requires some consideration —

Freddie (*with deep conviction*). You know, Deering, there must be some way of managing them.

Sir C. One would think so. There must be some way of managing them!

Freddie (*has another wrathful outburst*). And I used to go and wait outside her window, night after night, for hours! What do you think of that?

Sir C. I should say it was time very badly laid out.

Freddie (*pursuing his reminiscences*). Yes, and caught a chill on my liver and was laid up for six weeks.

Sir C. Poor old fellow!

Freddie. I say, Deering, what would you do?

Sir C. Well — well — it requires some consideration.

Freddie (*walking about*). You know, Deering, I may be an ass —

Sir C. Oh!

Freddie (*firmly*). Yes. I may be an ass, but I'm not a *silly* ass. I may be a fool, but I'm not a *d—ee—d* fool! Now there's something going on this morning between Rosamund and Jess. They're hobnobbing and whispering, and when two of 'em get together —

Sir C. Oh, my dear fellow, when two women get together, do you think it can ever be worth a man's while to ask what nonsense or mischief they're chattering? By the way, did you say that I could see Lady Jessica?

Freddie. She's upstairs with Rosy. I'll send her to you. Deering, if you were married, would you be a cipher in your own house?

Sir C. Not if I could help it.

Freddie (*very determinedly*). Neither will I.

(*Exit.*)

(Sir Christopher, *left alone, takes out the stylograph and looks at it carefully. In a few seconds enter* Lady Jessica, r. *As she enters he drops left hand which holds the stylograph.*)

Sir C. How d'ye do?

Lady J. How d'ye do? You wish to see me?

(Sir Christopher *presents the stylograph,* Lady Jessica *shows alarm.*)

Sir C. I see from the inscription that this belongs to you.

Lady J. (*taking stylograph*). Where did you find it?

Sir C. In a private sitting-room at the Star and Garter at Shepperford.

Lady J. I must have left it there some time ago. I could not imagine where I had lost it. Thank you so much.

Sir C. Pray don't mention it. (*An awkward pause.*) Good morning.

Lady J. Good morning. (Sir Christopher *has got to door at back.*) Sir Christopher — (Sir Christopher *stops.*) You were at Shepperford — ?

Sir C. Last evening.

Lady J. Pretty little spot.

Sir C. Charming.

Lady J. And a very good hotel?

Sir C. First class. Such splendid cooking!

Lady J. The cooking's good, is it? — oh, yes, I dined there once, some time ago.

Sir C. I dined there last night.

Lady J. Did you? At the table d'hôte?

Sir C. No, in a private sitting-room. Number ten.

Lady J. With a friend, I suppose?

Sir C. No. All alone.

Lady J. All alone? In number ten?

Sir C. All alone. In number ten.

Lady J. I suppose you — I suppose —

Sir C. Suppose nothing except that I had a remarkably good dinner, that I picked up that stylograph and brought it up to town with me last night. And there is an end of the whole matter, I assure you. Good morning.

Lady J. Good morning. Sir Christopher — you — (Sir Christopher *is again arrested at door.*) you — a — I may trust you?

Sir C. If I can help you — yes.

Lady J. Nothing — nothing is known about my being there?

Sir C. Your being there?

Lady J. (*after a pause — embarrassed*). I was to have dined in number ten.

Sir C. All alone?

Lady J. (*same embarrassed manner*). No — with Mr. Falkner. I was coming up to town from my cousin's. I started to walk to the station. I must have taken the wrong turning, for instead of finding myself at the station, I found myself at the Star and Garter. I was very hungry and I asked Mr. Falkner to give me a mere mouthful of dinner.

Sir C. A mere mouthful.

Lady J. And then George Nepean caught sight of me, came in, saw Mr. Falkner, and telegraphed my husband that I — of course Gilbert will believe the worst, and I — oh, I don't know what to do!

Sir C. Can I be of any service?

Lady J. How would you advise me to — to get out of it?

Sir C. Let us go over the various possibilities of the case. There are only two.

Lady J. What are they?

Sir C. Possibility number one — get out of it by telling fibs. Possibility number two — get out of it by telling the truth. Why not possibility number two?

Lady J. Oh, I couldn't!

Sir C. Couldn't what?

Lady J. Tell my husband that I was going to dine with Mr. Falkner.

Sir C. But it was quite by accident?

Lady J. Oh, quite!

Sir C. Eh!

Lady J. Quite!

Sir C. Well — ?

Lady J. But if Gilbert made inquiries —

Sir C. Well?

Lady J. It was such a very good dinner that Mr. Falkner ordered.

Sir C. It was! But, if he didn't expect you, why did he order that very excellent dinner?

Lady J. I'm sure you ought to be the last person to ask that, for it seems you ate it.

Sir C. I did.

Lady J. It's an ill wind that blows nobody good!

Sir C. I'm not grumbling at the wind, or at the dinner, but if I'm to help you out of this, you had better tell me all the truth. Especially as I'm not your husband. Now frankly, is this a mere indiscretion or —

Lady J. A mere indiscretion, nothing more. Honor — really, really honor.

Sir C. A mere indiscretion that will never be repeated.

Lady J. A mere indiscretion that will never be repeated. You believe me?

Sir C. (*looking at her*). Yes, I believe you, and I'll help you.

Lady J. Thank you! Thank you!

Sir C. Now did Falkner expect you?

Lady J. He ought not.

Sir C. He ought not. But he did.

Lady J. I told him I shouldn't come.

Sir C. Which was exactly the same as telling him you would.

Lady J. Have you seen Mr. Falkner?

Sir C. Only for a minute just before dinner. He came up to town.

Lady J. Without any dinner?

Sir C. Without any dinner. To come back to these two possibilities.

Lady J. Yes, Rosy and I have decided on — on —

Sir C. On possibility number one, tell a fib. I put that possibility first out of natural deference and chivalry towards ladies. The only objection I have to telling fibs is that you get found out.

Lady J. Oh, not always.

Sir C. Eh!

Lady J. I mean, if you arrange things not perhaps exactly as they were, but as they ought to have been.

Sir C. I see. In that way a lie becomes a sort of idealized and essential truth —

Lady J. Yes. Yes —

Sir C. I'm not a good hand at — idealizing.

Lady J. Ah, but then you're a man! No, I can't tell the truth. Gilbert would never believe me. Would you — after that dinner?

Sir C. The dinner would be some tax on my digestion.

(Lady Rosamund *enters* R., *followed by* Freddie, *with a self-important and self-assertive air.*)

Lady R. Good morning, Sir Christopher.

Sir C. (*shaking hands*). Good morning, Lady Rosamund.

Lady R. Jess, I've had to tell Freddie.

Lady J. And I've had to tell Sir Christopher. He was at Shepperford last evening, and he has promised to help us.

Freddie. I must say, Jess, that I think you have behaved — well — in a — confounded silly way.

Lady J. That is perfectly understood.

Freddie (*solemnly*). When a woman once forgets what is due —

Lady J. Oh, don't moralize! Rosy, Sir Christopher, do ask him not to improve the occasion.

Sir C. The question is, Freddie, whether you will help us in getting Lady Jessica out of this little difficulty.

Freddie. Well, I suppose I must join in.

Lady J. Now, Rosy, do you fully understand —

Sir C. I don't think I do. What is the exact shape which Possibility Number One has taken — or is going to take?

Lady R. Jess and I had arranged to have a little *tête-à-tête* dinner at Shepperford. Jess got there first. I hadn't arrived. George saw Jess at the window, and came in. At that moment Mr. Falkner happened to come into the room, and Jess knowing that appearances were against her, was confused, and couldn't on the spur of the moment give the right explanation.

Sir C. I suppose the waiter will confirm that right explanation?

Lady J. The waiter? I hadn't thought of that. Waiters will confirm anything, won't they? Couldn't you settle with the waiter?

Sir C. Well, I —

Lady J. You did have the dinner, you know!

Sir C. Very well. I'll settle with the waiter.

(*Enter Footman.*)

Footman (*announcing*). Mrs. Crespin!

(*Enter* Mrs. Crespin.)

(*Exit Footman.*)

Mrs. C. (*shows a little surprise at seeing them all, then goes very affectionately to* Lady Rosamund). Good morning dear. Good morning, Sir Christopher. (Sir Christopher *bows. To* Freddie.) I've seen you. (*Goes to* Lady Jessica.) Good morning, dearest. (*Kisses her.*)

Lady J. Good morning, dearest. (*Kisses her.*)

Mrs. C. (*to* Lady Jessica. *Looking anxiously at her*). You're looking pale and worried.

Lady J. Me? Oh no, I'm sure I don't, do I?

Sir C. Not to masculine eyes.

Mrs. C. (*to* Lady Rosamund). Dear, I've lost the address of that cook. Would you mind writing it out again?

Lady R. Certainly.

(*Goes to writing table and writes.*)

Mrs. C. (*to* Lady Jessica). What's the matter with our dear friend George Nepean?

Lady J. Matter?

Mrs. C. I ran against him in a post-office on my way from Paddington just now.

Lady J. Yes?

Mrs. C. Your husband is quite well, I hope?

Lady J. My husband? Oh, quite! He always is quite well. Why?

Mrs. C. George Nepean seemed so strange.

Lady J. How?

Mrs. C. He said he was going to Paddington to meet your husband — and he made so much of it.

Lady J. Ah! You see, my husband is a big man, so naturally George would make much of it.

Mrs. C. I always used to go to the station to meet my husband — when I had one.

Lady J. (*a little triumphantly*). Ah, Rosy and I know better than to kill our husbands with too much kindness.

Mrs. C. Still, I think husbands need a little pampering.

Sir C. Not at all. The brutes are so easily spoilt. A little overdose of sweetness, a little extra attention from a wife to her husband, and life is never the same again!

Freddie (*who has been waiting eagerly to get a word in*). I suppose you didn't mention anything to George Nepean about our dining with you last evening?

Mrs. C. (*alert*). Did I? Let me see! Yes! Yes! I did mention that you were over. Why? (*They all look at each other.*)

Freddie. Oh, nothing, nothing!

Mrs. C. I'm so sorry. Does it matter much?

Lady J. Not in the least.

Lady R. Oh, not in the least.

Freddie. Not in the least.

Sir C. Not at all.

Mrs. C. I'm afraid I made a mistake.

Lady R. How?

Mrs. C. Your husband —

Lady R. Oh, my dear, what does it matter what my Freddie says or does or thinks, eh, Freddie? (*Frowning angrily aside at* Freddie.) There's the address of the cook.

(*Giving the paper on which she has been writing.*)

Mrs. C. Thank you so much. Good morning, dearest. (*Kiss.*)

Lady R. Good morning, dearest. (*Kiss.*)

Mrs. C. (*going to* Lady Jessica). Good-bye, dearest. (*Kiss.*)

Lady J. Good-bye, dearest. (*Kiss.*)

Mrs. C. (*very sweetly, shaking hands*). Good-bye, Sir Christopher.

Sir C. Good-bye.

Mrs. C. You are quite sure that I didn't make a mistake in telling George Nepean that Lady Rosy and Mr. Tatton dined with me last evening?

Sir C. It was the truth, wasn't it?

Mrs. C. Of course it was.

Sir C. One never makes a mistake in speaking the truth.

Mrs. C. Really? That's a very sweeping assertion to make.

Sir C. I base it on my constant experience — and practice.

Mrs. C. You find it always answers to tell the truth?

Sir C. Invariably.

Mrs. C. I hope it will in this case. Good-bye! Good-bye! Good-bye!

(*Exit* Mrs. Crespin. *They all stand looking at each other, nonplussed.* Sir Christopher *slightly touching his head with perplexed gesture.*)

Sir C. Our fib won't do.

Lady R. Freddie, you incomparable nincompoop!

Freddie. I like that! If I hadn't asked her, what would have happened? George Nepean would have come in, you'd have plumped down on him with your lie, and what then? Don't you think it's jolly lucky I said what I did?

Sir C. It's lucky in this instance. But if I am to embark any further in these imaginative enterprises, I must ask you, Freddie, to keep a silent tongue.

Freddie. What for?

Sir C. Well, old fellow, it may be an unpalatable truth to you, but you'll never make a good liar.

Freddie. Very likely not. But if this sort of thing is going on in my house, I think I ought to.

Lady R. Oh, do subside, Freddie, do subside!

Lady J. Yes, George — and perhaps Gilbert — will be here directly. Oh, will somebody tell me what to do?

Sir C. We have tried possibility number one. It has signally failed. Why not possibility number two?

Lady J. Tell the truth? My husband would never believe it! Besides, he threatened that he wouldn't spare me. And he won't. No! No! No! Somebody dined with me last night, or was going to dine with me, and that somebody was a woman.

(*Enter Footman.*)

Footman (*announcing*). Mrs. Coke!

(*Enter* Dolly.)

Dolly (*going to* Lady R.). Ah, my dear Lady Rosamund — (*Exit Footman.*)

Lady J. (*goes affectionately and a little hysterically to her*). Dolly! How good of you! (*Kissing her.*)

Dolly. What's the matter?

Lady J. Dolly, you dined with me, or were going to dine with me at the Star and Garter at Shepperford last evening. Don't say you can't, and didn't, for you must and did!

Dolly. Of course I'll say anything that's — necessary.

Lady J. Oh, you treasure!

Dolly. But I don't understand —

(Lady Jessica *takes her aside and whispers eagerly.*)

Sir C. (*glancing at* Lady Jessica *and* Dolly). Possibility number one — with variations. I'm not required any further.

Lady R. Oh, Sir Christopher, you won't desert us?

Sir C. Certainly not, if I can be of any use. But if this is to be a going concern, don't you think the fewer partners the better?

Lady R. Oh, don't go. You can help us so much.

Sir C. How?

Lady R. Your mere presence will be an immense moral support to us.

Sir C. (*uncomfortable*). Thank you! Thank you!

Lady R. You can come to our assistance whenever we are in the lurch, corroborate us whenever we need corroboration — and —

Sir C. Bolster up generally.

Lady R. Yes. Besides, everybody knows you are such an honorable man. I feel they won't suspect you.

Sir C. (*uncomfortable*). Thank you! Thank you!

Dolly (*to* Lady Jessica). Very well, dear. I quite understand. After George went away, you were so upset at his suspicions that you came back to town without any dinner. Did I stay and have the dinner?

Sir C. No, no. I wouldn't go so far as that.

Dolly. But what did I do? I must have dined somewhere, didn't I? Not that I mind if I didn't dine anywhere. But won't it seem funny if I didn't dine somewhere?

Lady J. I suppose it will.

Dolly. Very well then, where did I dine? Do tell me. I know I shall get into an awful muddle if I don't know. Where did I dine?

(*Enter Footman.*)

Footman (*announcing*). Mr. George Nepean.

(*Enter* George Nepean.)

(*Exit Footman.*)

George (*enters very frigidly, bows very coldly. Very stiffly*). Good morning, Lady Rosamund! (*To the others — bowing.*) Good morning.

Lady R. (*very cordially*). My dear George, don't take that tragic tone. (*Insists on shaking hands.*) Anyone would suppose there was something dreadful the matter. I've just explained to Sir Christopher your mistake of last night.

George. My mistake?

Lady J. You shouldn't have left so hurriedly, George. I sent Mr. Falkner after you to explain. Dolly, tell him.

Dolly. Jess and I had arranged to have a little dinner all by our two selves —

George. Indeed!

Dolly. There's nothing strange in that, Sir Christopher?

Sir C. Not at all. I am sure any person of either sex would only be too delighted to dine *tête-à-tête* with you.

Dolly. And when I got there, I found poor Jess in an awful state. She said you had come into the room and had made the most horrid accusations against her, poor thing!

George. I made no accusation.

Lady J. What did you mean by saying that Gilbert must know?

George. Merely that I should tell him what I saw.

Lady J. And you have told him?

George. Yes, on his arrival an hour ago.

Lady J. Where is he?

George. Round at Sloane Street waiting till I have heard Lady Rosamund's explanation.

Lady R. Well, you have heard it. Or, rather, it's Dolly's explanation. The whole thing is so ridiculously simple. I think you ought to beg Jess's pardon.

George. I will when I am sure that I have wronged her.

Freddie. Oh, come, I say, George! you don't refuse to take a lady's word —

Lady R. Freddie, subside!

Dolly (*to* George). Poor Jess was so much upset by what you said that she couldn't eat any dinner, she nearly had hysterics, and when she got a little better, she came straight up to town, poor thing!

George. What was Mr. Falkner doing there?

Lady J. He was staying in the hotel and happened to come into the room at that moment. (*A little pause.*)

Lady R. Is there anything else you would like to ask?

George. No.

Lady R. And you're quite satisfied?

George. The question is not whether I'm satisfied, but whether Gilbert will be. I'll go and fetch him. Will you excuse me?

Sir C. (*stops him*). Nepean, I'm sure you don't wish to embitter your brother and Lady Jessica's whole future life by sowing jealousy and suspicion between them. Come now, like a good fellow, you'll smooth things over as much as you can.

George. I shall not influence my brother one way or the other. He must judge for himself.

(*Exit.* Sir Christopher *shrugs his shoulders.*)

Dolly (*to* Lady Jessica). I got through very well, didn't I?

Lady J. Yes, dear. Thank you so much. But George didn't seem to believe it, eh?

Freddie. It's so jolly thin. A couple of women dining together! what should a couple of women want to dine together for? Oh, it's too thin, you know!

Lady J. And you don't think Gilbert will believe it? He must! he must! Oh, I begin to wish that we had tried —

Sir C. Possibility number two. I'm afraid it's too late now.

Lady J. Oh, what shall I do? Do you think Gilbert will believe Dolly?

Lady R. He must if Dolly only sticks to it.

Dolly. Oh, I'll stick to it. Only I should like to know where I dined. Where did I dine?

(*Enter Footman to* Dolly.)

Footman. If you please, ma'am, Mr. Coke is waiting for you below.

Dolly (*with a scream*). Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I'd quite forgotten!

Lady R. What?

Dolly. I arranged to meet Archie here and take him on to the dentist's. (*To Footman.*) Tell Mr. Coke I'll come in a moment.

(*Exit Footman.*)

Dolly (*to* Lady Jessica). Dear, I must go —

Lady J. You can't! You must stay now and tell Gilbert — mustn't she, Sir Christopher?

Sir C. I'm afraid you must, Mrs. Coke. You are our sheet-anchor.

Dolly. But what can I tell Archie?

Lady R. Can't you put him off, send him away?

Dolly. What excuse can I make? He is so fidgety and inquisitive. He'll insist on knowing everything. No, I must go.

Lady J. (*desperate*). You can't! You can't! You must stay! Couldn't we tell Archie and ask him to help us?

Sir C. (*impatiently to* Lady R). Oh!

Dolly. Oh, I wouldn't tell Archie for the world. He wouldn't understand.

Enter, L., Archibald Coke, *in very correct frock coat very prim and starchy.*)

Coke. Good-morning, Rosy! Freddie! Sir Christopher! (*Nodding all round.*) Now, Dolly, are you ready?

Dolly. I — I —

Lady J. She can't go, Archie.

Coke. Can't go?

Lady J. She — she isn't well.

Coke. Not well? (*Alarmed.*) Not influenza again?

Dolly. No, not influenza. But I'd rather not go.

Coke. Oh, nonsense, nonsense! I cannot take the gas alone. (*To* Sir Christopher.) I've a terrible dread of the gas. I'm sure they'll give me too much some day. Now, Dolly.

Lady R. (*to* Sir Christopher). Gilbert will be here directly. Can't you get him away?

Sir C. Coke, your wife isn't just the thing, as you can see. I'll go to the dentist's with you. Come along! I'll see they give you the right dose.

Coke (*resisting*). No. My wife is the proper person to go to the dentist with me, and see that the gas is rightly administered. Come, Dolly!

Lady J. (*comes desperately to* Coke). Dolly can't go!

Coke. Why not?

Lady J. She must stay here and tell Gilbert that she dined with me last evening.

Coke. Tell Gilbert that she dined with you last evening! What for?

Sir C. (*aside to* Lady Rosamund). We're taking too many partners into this concern.

Coke. She dined with me. Why should she tell Gilbert she dined with you?

Lady J. If you must know, I was coming to the station from Barbara's, and I must have taken the wrong turning —

Coke (*very suspicious*). The wrong turning —

Lady J. Yes, for instead of finding myself at the station, I found myself at the Star and Garter.

Coke. The Star and Garter!

Lady J. And as I was frightfully hungry I asked Mr. Falkner to give me a little dinner.

Coke. A little dinner.

Lady J. George Nepean happened to come in, and seeing the dinner things laid, actually suspected me of dining with Mr. Falkner! And he has told Gilbert, and don't you see — if Dolly will only say that it was she who was dining with me — don't you see?

Coke. No, I don't. I cannot lend myself to anything of the sort. And I expressly forbid Dolly to say that she dined with you.

Lady J. But she has said so. She has just told George Nepean.

Coke. Told George Nepean!

Dolly. I couldn't leave poor Jess in a scrape. And now I have said so, I must stick to it, mustn't I? You wouldn't have me tell another one now.

Coke. Well, I'm surprised! Really, I consider it quite disgraceful.

Freddie. Look here, Coke, we can't let Gilbert think that Jess was dining with Falkner, can we? He'd only make a howling scandal, and drag us all into it. We've got to say something. I know it's jolly thin, but can you think of a better one?

Coke. No, and I decline to have anything to do with this! I should have thought my character was too well known for me to be asked to a — a — It is too disgraceful! I will not lend my countenance to anything of the kind!

Lady R. Very well then, will you please take yourself off and leave us to manage the affair ourselves?

Coke. No, I will not forfeit my self-respect, I will not permit my wife to forfeit her self-respect by taking part in these proceedings. Really, it is — it is — it is too disgraceful.

(Lady Jessica *suddenly bursts into tears, sobs violently.*)

Sir C. (*comes up to him, very calm, touches him on the shoulder*). Coke, I assure you that theoretically I have as great an objection to lying as you or any man living. But Lady Jessica has acted a little foolishly. No more. Of that I am sure. If you consent to hold your tongue, I think Gilbert Nepean will accept your wife's explanation and the affair will blow over. If, however, you insist on the truth coming out, what will happen? You will very likely bring about a rupture between them, you may possibly place Lady Jessica in a position where she will have no alternative but to take a fatal plunge, and you will drag yourself and your wife into a very unpleasant family scandal. That's the situation.

Coke. But it places me in a very awkward position. No, really, I cannot consent — I'm an honorable man.

Sir C. So are we all, all honorable men. The curious thing is that ever since the days of the Garden of Eden, women have had a knack of impaling us honorable men on dilemmas of this kind, where the only alternative is to be false to the truth or false to them. In this instance I think we may very well keep our mouths shut without suffering any violent pangs of conscience about the matter. Come now!

Coke (*overwhelmed*). Well, understand me, if I consent to keep my mouth shut, I must not be supposed to countenance what is going on. That is quite understood?

Sir C. Oh, quite! Quite! We'll consider you as strictly neutral.

Coke (*rising up, violently*). No! On

second thoughts, I really cannot. I cannot!

Lady R. Very well! Then will you go away and leave us to manage it as we can?

Coke. And I had arranged to take the gas so comfortably this morning. It's most unfair to place me in a position of this kind. I must protest — I really —

(*Enter Footman.*)

Footman (*announcing*). Mr. Gilbert Nepean. Mr. George Nepean.

Coke. Oh!

(*Enter* Gilbert *and* George Nepean.)

(*Exit Footman.*)

Lady R. (*advances very cordially to* Gilbert, *who does not respond*). Good morning, Gilbert.

Gilbert. Good morning. Good morning, Coke.

Coke (*very uncomfortable*). Good morning.

Gilbert (*nodding*). Freddie! Deering! (*Looks at* Lady Jessica, *who looks at him. They do not speak. Pause, looking round.*) I thought I was coming here for a private explanation.

Lady R. No, Sir Christopher. If Gilbert is determined to carry this any further we shall need the unbiassed testimony of an impartial friend, so that everybody may know exactly what did occur. Please stay.

Sir C. (*puts down hat. To himself*). Whew!

Lady R. Gilbert, don't be foolish. Everybody here knows all about the stupid affair of last evening.

Gilbert. Everybody here knows? Well, I don't. I shall be glad to be informed. (*Looks round.*)

(Coke *shows symptoms of great discomfort.*)

Sir C. Nepean, I'm sure you don't wish to make any more than is necessary of Lady Jessica's trifling indiscretion —

Gilbert. I wish to make no more of it than the truth, and I'll take care that nobody makes less of it. Now — (*to* Lady Jessica, *very furiously*) — you were dining with this fellow, Falkner, last evening?

Lady J. No.

Gilbert. No? Then whom did you dine with?

Lady J. If you speak like that I shan't answer you.

Gilbert. Will you tell me what I ask?

Lady J. No!

Gilbert. No, you won't? Perhaps, as you all know, somebody else will oblige me. Coke —

Coke (*most uncomfortable*). Really, I — I don't know all the particulars, and I would prefer not to be mixed up in your private affairs.

Gilbert. Deering — you?

Sir C. My dear fellow, I only know what I've heard, and hearsay evidence is proverbially untrustworthy. Now, if I may offer you a little advice, if I were you I should gently take Lady Jessica by the hand, I should gently lead her home, I should gently use all those endearing little arts of persuasion and entreaty which a husband may legitimately use to his wife, and I should gently beguile her into telling me the whole truth. I should believe everything she told me, I shouldn't listen to what anybody else said, and I should never mention the matter again. Now, do as I tell you, and you'll be a happy man to-morrow, and for the rest of your life.

(*Pause.*)

Gilbert (*looks at* Lady Jessica). No. (Sir Christopher *shrugs his shoulders.*) I came here for an explanation, and I won't go till I've got it.

Lady R. My dear Gilbert, we're patiently waiting to give you an explanation, if you'll only listen to it. Dolly, do tell him how it all happened, and let him see what a donkey he is making of himself.

Dolly. Yes, Gilbert, I wish you wouldn't get in these awful tempers. You frighten us so that in a very little while we shan't know whether we're speaking the truth, or whether we're not.

Gilbert. Go on!

Dolly. Jess and I had arranged to have a little *tête-à-tête* dinner at Shepperford and talk over old times, all by our two selves (Coke *gets very uncomfortable*) — hadn't we, Jess? Rosy, you heard us arranging it all?

Lady R. Yes, on the last night you were at our place.

Dolly. Yes. Well, Jess got there first and then Mr. Falkner happened to come into the room, and then George happened to come in and wouldn't wait to listen to Jess's explanation, would he, Jess? Well, when I got there, I found Jess in strong hysterics, poor old dear! I couldn't get her round for ever so long. And as soon as she was better she came straight up to town. And that's all.

(*Pause.*)

Gilbert. And what did you do?

Dolly (*very nervous*). I came up to town too.

Gilbert. Without any dinner?

Dolly. No — I —

Gilbert. Where did you dine?

Dolly. I didn't really dine anywhere — not to say dine. I had some cold chicken and a little tongue when I got home. (*Pause.*) And a tomato salad.

Coke (*very much shocked at* Dolly). Oh, of all the —

(Sir Christopher *nudges him to be quiet.*)

Gilbert. Coke, what do you know of this?

Coke. Well — I know what Dolly has just told you.

Gilbert. You allow your wife to dine out alone?

Coke. Yes — yes — on certain occasions.

Gilbert. And you knew of this arrangement?

Coke. Yes, — at least, no — not before she told me of it. But after she told me, I did know.

George. But Jessica said that she expected a small party.

Dolly. I was the small party.

Gilbert (*to* Coke). What time did Dolly get home last evening?

Coke. Eh? Well, about —

Dolly. A little before nine.

George. Impossible! I was at Shepperford after half past seven. If Lady Jessica had hysterics, and you stayed with her, you could scarcely have reached Kensington before nine.

Dolly. Well, perhaps it was ten. Yes, it was ten.

Gilbert. Coke, were you at home last evening when your wife got back?

Coke. I? No — yes, yes — no — not precisely.

Gilbert (*growing indignant*). Surely you must know whether you were at home or not when your wife returned?

Coke. No, I don't. And I very much object to be cross-questioned in this manner. I've told you all I know, and — I — I withdraw from the whole business. Now, Dolly, are you ready?

Gilbert. No, stop! I want to get at the bottom of this and I will. (*Coming furiously to* Lady Jessica.) Once more, will you give me your version of this cock-and-bull story?

(*Enter Footman.*)

Footman (*announcing*). Mr. Falkner!

Gilbert. Ah!

Sir C. Nepean! Nepean! Control yourself!

(*Enter* Falkner.)

(*Exit Footman.*)

Gilbert. Let me be, Deering. (*Going to* Falkner.) You were at Shepperford last evening. My wife was there with you?

Falkner. I was at Shepperford last evening. Lady Jessica was there. She was dining with Lady Rosamund —

Lady R. No! No!

Gilbert. Lady Jessica was dining with Lady Rosamund?

Falkner. I understood her to say so, did I not, Lady Rosamund?

Lady R. No! No! It was Mrs. Coke who was dining with Lady Jessica.

Falkner. Then I misunderstood you. Does it matter?

Gilbert. Yes. I want to know what the devil you were doing there?

Sir C. Nepean! Nepean!

Gilbert. Do you hear? What the

devil were you doing there? Will you tell me, or —

(*Trying to get at* Falkner, Sir Christopher *holds him back.*)

Lady J. (*rises very quietly*). Mr. Falkner, tell my husband the truth.

Falkner. But, Lady Jessica —

Lady J. Yes, if you please — the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Tell him all. I wish it.

Gilbert. You hear what she says. Now then, the truth — and be damned to you!

Falkner (*looks around, then after a pause, with great triumph*). I love Lady Jessica with all my heart and soul! I asked her to come to me at Shepperford last evening. She came. Your brother saw us and left us. The next moment Lady Rosamund came, and she had scarcely gone when the maid came with your telegram and took Lady Jessica back to town. If you think there was anything more on your wife's side than a passing folly and amusement at my expense, you will wrong her. If you think there is anything less on my side than the deepest, deepest, deepest love and worship, you will wrong me. Understand this. She is guiltless. Be sure of that. And now you've got the truth, and be damned to *you*. (*Goes to door at back — turns.*) If you want me, you know where to find me. (*To* Lady Jessica.) Lady Jessica, I am at your service — always!

(*Exit at back. They all look at each other.*)

Sir C. (*very softly to himself*). Possibility Number Two — with a vengeance!

CURTAIN.
(*Time* — 38 *minutes.*)

ACT IV

Scene: — *Drawing-room in* Sir Christopher's *flat in Victoria Street.* L. *at back a large recess, taking up half the stage. The right half is taken up by an inner room furnished as library and smoking-room. Curtains dividing library from drawing-room. Door up stage,* L. *A table down stage,* R. *The room is in great confusion, with portmanteau open, clothes, etc., scattered over the floor; articles which an officer going to Central Africa might want are lying about.*

(Time: *night, about half-past nine o'clock.*)

(Sir Christopher *and* Taplin *are busy packing. Ring at door.*)

Sir C. See who it is, Taplin; and come back and finish packing the moment I am disengaged.

(*Exit* Taplin. *He re-enters in a few moments, showing in* Beatrice *in evening dress.* Sir Christopher *goes to her, and shakes hands cordially.*)

Bea. I was out dining when you called. But I got your message and I came on at once.

Sir C. I couldn't wait. I had to come back and pack. (*Going on with his packing.*) I haven't one half-moment to spare.

Bea. When do you start?

Sir C. To-morrow morning. It's very urgent. I've been at the War Office all the afternoon. You'll excuse my going on with this. I've three most important duties to fulfil to-night.

Bea. What are they?

Sir C. (*packing*). I've got to pack. I've got to persuade Ned to come out there with me — if I can. And I've got (*looking straight at her*) to make you promise to be my wife when I come home again.

Bea. Oh, Kit, you know what I've told you so often!

Sir C. (*packing always*). Yes, and you're telling it me again, and wasting my time when every moment is gold. Ah, dear, forgive me, you know I think you're worth the wooing. And you know I'm the man to woo you. And you know I'm ready to spend three, five, seven, fourteen or twenty-one years in winning you. But if you'd only say "Yes" this minute, and let me pack and see Ned, you'd save me such a lot of trouble. And I'll do all the love-making when I come back.

Bea. Where is Ned?

Sir C. Playing the fool for Lady Jessica.

There never was but one woman in this world that was worth playing the fool for, and I'm playing the fool for her. I've sent for Ned to come here. That's a digression. Come back to brass-tacks. You'll be my wife when I come home?

Bea. Let me think it over, Kit.

Sir C. No. You've had plenty of time for that. I can't allow you to think it over any longer.

Bea. But it means so much to me. Let me write to you out there?

Sir C. (*very determinedly*). No. (*Leaves his packing, takes out his watch.*) It's a little too bad of you when I'm so pressed. Now, I can only give you five minutes, and it must absolutely be fixed up in that time. (*With great tenderness and passion.*) Come, my dear, dear chum, what makes you hesitate to give yourself to me? You want me to come well out of this, don't you?

Bea. You know I do!

Sir C. Then you don't love your country if you won't have me. Once give me your promise, and it will give me the pluck of fifty men! Don't you know if I'm sure of you I shall carry everything before me?

Bea. Will you? Will you? But if you were to die —

Sir C. I won't die if you're waiting to be my wife when I come home. And you will? You will? I won't hear anything but "Yes." You shan't move one inch till you've said "Yes." Now! say it! Say "Yes!" Say "Yes" — do you hear?

Bea. (*throwing herself into his arms*). Yes! Yes! Yes! Take me! Take me!

Sir C. (*kissing her very reverently*). My wife when I come home again. (*A pause.*)

Bea. You know, Kit, I can love very deeply.

Sir C. And so you shall, when I come home again. And so will I when I come home again. (*Looking at his watch.*) A minute and a quarter! I must get on with my packing.

Bea. Kit, there will be some nursing and other woman's work out there?

Sir C. Yes, I suppose —

Bea. I'll come with you.

Sir C. Very well. How long will it take you to pack?

Bea. Half an hour.

Sir C. All right! I must wait here for Ned. Come back and have some supper by-and-by.

Bea. Yes — in half an hour.

Sir C. We might be married at Cairo — on our way out?

Bea. Just as you please.

Sir C. Or before we start tomorrow morning?

Bea. Will there be time?

Sir C. Oh, I'll make time.

(*Enter* Taplin.)

Taplin. Mr. Gilbert Nepean is below, Sir Christopher.

Sir C. (*glancing at his packing*). Show him up, Taplin.

(*Exit* Taplin.)

Sir C. (*holding* Beatrice's *hand*). Tomorrow morning, then?

Bea. Yes, I've given you some trouble to win me, Kit?

Sir C. No more than you're worth.

Bea. I'll give you none now you have won me.

(*Enter* Taplin.)

Taplin (*announcing*). Mr. Gilbert Nepean.

(*Enter* Gilbert Nepean.)

(*Exit* Taplin.)

Bea. How d'ye do?

Gilbert. How d'ye do?

(*Shaking hands.*)

Bea. And good-bye. (*To* Sir Christopher.) No, I won't have you come down all those stairs, indeed I won't. Au revoir. (*Exit.*)

Gilbert. Excuse my coming at this hour.

Sir C. I'm rather pressed. What can I do for you?

Gilbert. I have been down to Shepperford this afternoon. It seems you dined there last evening.

Sir C. I did.

Gilbert. I want to get all the evidence.

Sir C. What for?

Gilbert. To guide me in my future action. Deering, I trust you. Can I take that fellow's word that my wife is guiltless?

Sir C. I'm sure you can.

Gilbert. How do you know?

Sir C. Because he'd give his head to tell you that she is not.

Gilbert. Why?

Sir C. It would give him the chance he is waiting for — to take her off your hands.

Gilbert. Take her off my hands — he's waiting for that?

Sir C. Don't you see he is? And don't you see that you're doing your best to make him successful?

Gilbert. How?

Sir C. Don't think when you've married a woman that you can sit down and neglect her. You can't. You've married one of the most charming women in London, and when a man has married a charming woman, if he doesn't continue to make love to her some other man will. Such are the sad ways of humankind! How have you treated Lady Jessica?

Gilbert. But do you suppose I will allow my wife to go out dining with other men?

Sir C. The best way to avoid that is to take her out to dinner yourself — and to give her a good one. Have you dined to-night?

Gilbert. Dined? No! I can't dine till I know what to believe.

Sir C. The question is, what do you want to believe? If you want to believe her innocent, take the facts as they stand. If you want to believe her guilty, continue to treat her as you are doing, and you'll very soon have plenty of proof. And let me tell you, nobody will pity you. Do you want to believe her innocent?

Gilbert. Of course I do.

Sir C. Where is she?

Gilbert. I don't know — at home, I suppose.

Sir C. Go home to her — don't say one word about what has happened, and invite her out to the very best dinner that London can provide.

Gilbert. But after she has acted as she has done?

Sir C. My dear fellow, she's only a woman. I never met but one woman that was worth taking seriously. What are they? A kind of children, you know. Humor them, play with them, buy them the toys they cry for, but don't get angry with them. They're not worth it, except one! Now I must get on with my packing.

(Sir Christopher *sets to work packing.* Gilbert *walks up and down the room, biting his nails, deliberating.* Gilbert, *after a moment or two, speaks.*)

Gilbert. Perhaps you're right, Deering.

Sir C. Oh, I know I am!

Gilbert. I'll go to her.

Sir C. (*busy packing*). Make haste, or you may be too late.

(Gilbert *goes to door. At that moment enter* Taplin.)

Taplin (*announcing*). Mr. Falkner!

(*Enter* Falkner.)

(*Exit* Taplin. Gilbert *and* Falkner *stand for a moment looking at each other. Exit* Gilbert; Falkner *looks after him.*)

Sir C. Well?

Falkner (*very elated*). You want to see me?

Sir C. Yes. You seem excited.

Falkner. I've had some good news.

Sir C. What?

Falkner. The best. She loves me.

Sir C. You've seen her?

Falkner. No.

Sir C. Written to her?

Falkner. Yes. I've just had this answer.

(*Taking out letter.*)

Sir C. Where is she?

Falkner. Still at her sister's. (*Reading.*) "I shall never forget the words you spoke this morning. You were right in saying that your love would not be wasted. I have learned at last what it is worth. You said you would be at my service always. Do not write again. Wait till you hear from me, and the moment I send for you, come to me." I knew I should win her at last, and I shall!

Sir C. Après?

Falkner. What does it matter? If I can persuade her I shall take her out to Africa with me.

Sir C. Africa? Nonsense! There's only one woman in the world that's any use in that part of the globe, and I'm taking her out myself.

Falkner. Beatrice.

Sir C. We are to be married to-morrow morning.

Falkner (*shaking hands warmly*). I congratulate you — with all my heart.

Sir C. Thank you. (*Pause.*) You'll come with us, Ned?

Falkner. If she will come too.

Sir C. Oh, we can't have her.

Falkner. Why not?

Sir C. In the first place, she'd be very much in the way. In the second place — it's best to be frank — Lady Deering will not recognize Lady Jessica.

Falkner. Very well. (*Turns on heel. Very curtly.*) Good-night, Kit!

Sir C. No. Ned, you're still up that everlasting *cul-de-sac* — playing the lover to a married woman, and I've got to drag you out of it.

Falkner. It's no use, Kit. My mind is made up. Let me go.

Sir C. To the devil with Lady Jessica? No, I'm going to stop you.

Falkner. Ah, you'll stop me! How?

Sir C. There was a time when one whisper would have done it. (*Whispers.*) Duty. You know that you're the only man who can treat peaceably with the chiefs. You know that your going out may save hundreds, perhaps thousands of lives.

Falkner. I'm not sure of that.

Sir C. You're not sure? Well then, try it — put it to the test. But you know there's every chance. You know the whole country is waiting for you to declare yourself. You know that you have a splendid chance of putting the crown on your life's work, and you know that if you don't seize it, it will be because you stay here skulking after her!

Falkner. Skulking!

Sir C. What do you call it? What will everybody call it? Ned, you've faced the most horrible death day after day for months. You've done some of the bravest things out there that have been done by any Englishman in this generation; but if you turn tail now there's only one word will fit you to the end of your days, and that word is "Coward!"

Falkner. Coward!

Sir C. Coward! And there's only one epitaph to be written on you by-and-by — "Sold his honor, his fame, his country, his duty, his conscience, his all, for a petticoat!"

Falkner. Very well, then, when I die write that over me. I tell you this, Kit, if I can only win her — and I shall, I shall, I feel it — she'll leave that man and come to me; and then! — I don't care one snap of the fingers if Africa is swept bare of humanity from Cairo to Cape Town, and from Teneriffe to Zanzibar! Now argue with me after that!

Sir C. Argue with you? Not I! But I wish there was some way of kidnapping fools into sense and reason and locking them up there for the rest of their lives.

(*Enter* Taplin.)

Taplin (*announcing*). Lady Jessica Nepean, Lady Rosamund Tatton.

(*Enter* Lady Jessica *and* Lady Rosamund.)

(*Exit* Taplin.)

(Lady Jessica *shows delighted surprise at seeing* Falkner, *goes to him cordially.* Lady Rosamund *tries to stop* Lady Jessica *from going to* Falkner.)

Lady J. (*to* Falkner). I didn't expect to find you here.

Falkner. I am waiting for you.

Lady R. (*interposing*). No, Jess, no. Sir Christopher! (*Aside to him.*) Help me to get her away from him.

(Lady Jessica *and* Falkner *are talking vigorously together.*)

Sir C. One moment. Perhaps we may as well get this little matter fixed up here and now. (*Takes out watch, looking rue-*

fully at his packing.) Lady Jessica, may I ask what has happened since I left you this morning?

Lady J. Nothing. My husband went away in a rage. I've stayed with Rosy all day.

Lady R. We've been talking it all over.

Lady J. Oh, we've been talking it all over — (*Gesture*) — and over and over, till I'm thoroughly — *seasick* of it!

Lady R. And so I persuaded her to come and talk it over with you.

Sir C. (*glancing at his packing, to* Lady Jessica). You can't arrive at a decision?

Lady J. Oh, yes, I can; only Rosy won't let me act on it.

Lady R. I should think not.

Sir C. What is your decision?

Lady J. I don't mind for myself. I feel that everything is in a glorious muddle, and I don't care how I get out of it, or whether I get out of it at all.

Sir C. But on the whole the best way of getting out of it is to run away with Mr. Falkner?

Lady J. Mr. Falkner has behaved splendidly to me.

Sir C. He has! He's a brick! And I'm quite sure that in proposing to ruin your reputation, and make you miserable for life, he is actuated by the very best intentions.

Lady J. I don't care whether I'm happy or miserable for the rest of my life.

Sir C. You don't care now, but you will to-morrow and next week, and next year, and all the years after.

Lady J. No, I shan't! I won't!

Falkner. I'll take care, Lady Jessica, that you never regret this step. Your mind is quite made up?

Lady J. Yes, quite.

Falkner. Then no more be said.

(*Offering arm. Gesture of despair from* Lady Rosamund. Sir Christopher *soothes her.*)

Sir C. One moment, Ned! (*Takes out his watch, looks ruefully at his packing, half aside.*) Good Lord! when shall I get on with my packing? (*Puts watch in pocket, faces* Falkner *and* Lady Jessica *very resolutely.*) Now! I've nothing to say in the abstract against running away with another man's wife! There may be planets where it is not only the highest ideal morality, but where it has the further advantage of being a practical way of carrying on society. But it has this one fatal defect in our country — it won't work! You know what we English are, Ned. We're not a bit better than our neighbors, but, thank God! we do pretend we are, and we do make it hot for anybody who disturbs that holy pretence. And take my word for it, my dear Lady Jessica, my dear Ned, it won't work. You know it's not an original experiment you're making. It has been tried before. Have you ever known it to be successful? Lady Jessica, think of the brave pioneers who have gone before you in this enterprise. They've all perished, and their bones whiten the anti-matrimonial shore. Think of them! Charley Gray and Lady Rideout — flitting shabbily about the Continent at cheap *table d'hôtes* and gambling clubs, rubbing shoulders with all the blackguards and demi-mondaines of Europe. Poor old Fitz and his beauty — moping down at Farnhurst, cut by the county, with no single occupation except to nag and rag each other to pieces from morning to night. Billy Dover and Polly Atchison —

Lady J. (*indignant*). Well!

Sir C. — cut in for fresh partners in three weeks. That old idiot, Sir Bonham Dancer — paid five thousand pounds damages for being saddled with the professional strong man's wife. George Nuneham and Mrs. Sandys — George is conducting a tramcar in New York, and Mrs. Sandys — Lady Jessica, you knew Mrs. Sandys, a delicate, sweet little creature, I've met her at your house — she drank herself to death, and died in a hospital. Not encouraging, is it? Marriage may be disagreeable, it may be unprofitable, it may be ridiculous; but it isn't as bad as that! And do you think the experiment is going to be successful in *your* case? Not a bit of it! No. Ned, hear me out. (*Turns to* Lady Jessica.) First of all there will be the shabby scandal and dirty business of the divorce court. You won't like that. It isn't nice! You won't like it. After the divorce court, what is Ned to do with you? Take you to Africa? I do implore you, if you hope for any happiness in that state to which it is pleasing Falkner and Providence to call you, I do implore you, don't go out to Africa with him. You'd never stand the climate and the hardships, and you'd bore each other to death in a week. But if you don't go out to Africa, what are you to do? Stay in England, in society? Everybody will cut you. Take a place in the country? Think of poor old Fitz down at Farnhurst! Go abroad? Think of Charley Gray and Lady Rideout. Take any of the other dozen alternatives and find yourself stranded in some shady hole or corner, with the one solitary hope and ambition of somehow wriggling back into respectability. That's your side of it, Lady Jessica. As for Ned here, what is to become of him? (*Angry gesture from* Falkner.) Yes, Ned, I know you don't want to hear, but I'm going to finish. Turn away your head. This is for Lady Jessica. He's at the height of his career, with a great and honorable task in front of him. If you turn him aside you'll not only wreck and ruin your own life and reputation, but you'll wreck and ruin his. You won't! You won't! His interests, his duty, his honor all lie out there. If you care for him, don't keep him shuffling and malingering here. Send him out with me to finish his work like the good, splendid fellow he is. Set him free, Lady Jessica, and go back to your home. Your husband has been here. He's sorry for what is past, and he has promised to treat you more kindly in the future. He's waiting at home to take you out. You missed a very good dinner last night. Don't miss another to-night. I never saw a man in a better temper than your husband. Go to him, and do, once for all, have done with this other folly. Do believe me, my dear Ned, my dear Lady Jessica, before it is too late, do believe me, it won't work, it won't work, it won't work! (*A little pause.*)

Lady J. I think you're the most horrid man I ever met!

Sir C. Because I've told you the truth.

Lady J. Yes, that's the worst of it! It is the truth.

Lady R. It's exactly what I've been telling her all the afternoon.

Falkner. Lady Jessica, I want to speak to you alone.

Lady J. What's the use? We've got to part.

Falkner. No! No!

Lady J. Yes, my friend. I won't ruin your career. We've got to part: and the fewer words the better.

Falkner. I can't give you up.

Lady J. You must! Perhaps it's best. You can always cherish your fancy portrait of me, and you'll never find out how very unlike me it is. And I shall read about you in the newspapers and be very proud — and — come along, Rosy!

(*Going off.* Falkner *is going after her.*)

Sir C. (*stopping him*). It can answer no purpose, Ned.

Falkner. What the devil has it got to do with you? You've taken her from me. Leave her to me for a few minutes. Lady Jessica, I claim to speak to you alone.

Lady J. It can only be to say "Good-bye."

Falkner. I'll never say it.

Lady J. Then I must. Good-bye!

Falkner. No — say it to me alone.

Lady J. It can only be that — no more —

Falkner. Say it to me alone.

(*Pointing to curtains.*)

Lady J. Rosy, wait for me. I won't be a minute.

(*Going to* Falkner. Lady Rosamund *makes a little movement to stop her.* Sir Christopher *by a gesture silences* Lady Rosamund *and allows* Lady Jessica *to pass through the curtains where* Falkner *has preceded her.*)

Sir C. (*to* Lady Jessica). Remember his future is at stake as well as yours. Only the one word.

Lady J. (*as she passes through curtains*). Only the one word.

Sir C. (*to* Lady Rosamund). You'll excuse my packing. I've not a moment to waste.

(*Enter* Taplin.)

Taplin. Mr. Gilbert Nepean, Sir Christopher; he says he must see you.

Sir C. You didn't say Lady Jessica was here?

Taplin. No, Sir Christopher.

Sir C. I'll come to him.

(*Exit* Taplin. Lady Rosamund *passes between the curtains.* Sir Christopher *is going to door, meets* Gilbert Nepean *who enters very excitedly.*)

Gilbert (*off* l.). Deering! Deering, she's not at home! She's not at her sister's. You don't think she has gone to that fellow?

Sir C. Make yourself easy. She is coming back to you.

Gilbert. Where is she?

Sir C. Will you let me take a message to her? May I tell her that for the future you will treat her with every kindness and consideration?

Gilbert. Yes — yes. Say — oh — tell her what you please. Say I know I've behaved like a bear. Tell her I'm sorry, and if she'll come home I'll do my best to make her happy in future.

Sir C. And (*taking out watch*) it's rather too late for dinner, may I suggest an invitation to supper?

Gilbert. Yes, — yes.

Sir C. (*calls*). Lady Rosamund —

(Lady Rosamund *enters.*)

Gilbert. You —

(*Going towards curtains.* Sir Christopher *intercepts him.*)

Lady R. We stepped over to ask Sir Christopher's advice.

Sir C. And, strange to say, they've taken it.

Gilbert (*trying to get to curtains*). Where is Jessica?

Sir C. (*stopping him*). No. I'm to take the message. Lady Jessica, your husband is waiting to take you to supper. You've only just time to go home and dress.

(Lady Jessica *draws curtains aside, turns and throws a last agonized adieu to* Falkner *who stands speechless and helpless.* Lady Jessica *then controls her features and comes out to* Gilbert. *The curtains close.*)

Gilbert. Will you come home and dress and go to the Savoy to supper? (*Offering arm.*)

Lady J. Delighted. (*Taking his arm.*)

Gilbert. And you, Rosy?

Lady R. I can't. (*Looking at watch.*) It's nearly ten o'clock! Good-night, Sir Christopher. Good-night, dearest. (*Kissing* Lady Jessica.) Good-night, Gilbert. Take care of her, or you'll lose her. Excuse my running away, I must get back to my poor old Freddie.

(*Exit* Lady Rosamund. Falkner's *face appears through the curtains.* Lady Jessica *sees it.*)

Sir C. Good-night, Lady Jessica, and good-bye!

Lady J. Good-night, Sir Christopher, and —(*at* Falkner) one last "Good-bye."

(*She looks towards curtains as if about to break away from* Gilbert *and go to* Falkner.)

Sir C. Good-night, Nepean!

Gilbert. Good-night, Deering.

Sir C. Try and keep her. She's worth the keeping.

Gilbert. I'll try.

(*Exeunt* Lady Jessica *and* Gilbert. Sir Christopher *goes towards door with them;* Falkner *comes forward in great despair from curtains, throws himself into chair against table, buries his face in his hands.*)

Sir C. (*goes to him very affectionately*). Come! Come! My dear old Ned! This will never do! And all for a woman! They're not worth it. (*Aside, softly.*) Except one! They're not worth it. Come, buckle on your courage! There's work in front of you, and fame, and honor! And I must take you out and bring you back with flying colors! Come! [582 Come! My dear old fellow!

Falkner. Let me be for a minute, Kit. Let me be!

(*Enter* Beatrice. Sir Christopher *goes to her.*)

Bea. What's the matter?

Sir C. Hush! Poor old chap! He's [587 hard hit! Everybody else seems to be making a great mess of their love affairs. We won't make a mess of ours?

Bea. No. You'll get over this, Ned? We'll help you. You'll get over it? [592

Falkner (*rising with great determination*). Yes, I shall pull round. I'll try! I'll try! To-morrow, Kit? We start to-morrow?

Sir C. (*putting one arm round each* [597 *affectionately*). To-morrow! My wife! My friend! My two comrades!

CURTAIN.

(*Time* — 21 *minutes.*)

APPENDIX

I. NOTES ON THE AUTHORS
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APPENDIX

I. NOTES ON THE AUTHORS

NICHOLAS UDALL was born in Hampshire in 1505. He was admitted to Winchester when he was twelve and to Oxford when he was only fifteen. He became a Bachelor of Arts in the spring of 1524; and in the fall of that year he was appointed probationary fellow. Suspected of Lutheran leanings he did not receive the degree of Master of Arts until 1534, in which year he was appointed head master of Eton. He wrote various verses in English and translated several Latin authors. He seems to have been a frequent and effective preacher; and he received several important appointments in the church. We do not know exactly when he became head master of Westminster School, but it must have been prior to 1555. He lost this position in November, 1556; and he died in the following month, being buried in St. Margaret's, Westminster, two days before Christmas. He was a scholar of parts and a man of many interests, religious and political, literary and dramatic. The date when he wrote *Ralph Roister Doister* is still in dispute, with opinion inclining to accept one of the years between 1534 and 1541, when his age was from twenty-nine to thirty-six.

THOMAS KYD. All that is known with certainty of Kyd's life is that he was born in London in 1558, the year of Elizabeth's accession; that he was the son of a scrivener; and that at seven he entered Merchant Taylors' School. Here he was a student with the poet Spenser, under Mulcaster. His education was excellent presumably, for he shows himself well read in the French, Italian, and Latin writers, especially Seneca. He began his career as a translator and pamphleteer. Four plays are ascribed to Kyd, mainly because of casual references to him in the writings of his contemporaries: *The First Part of Jeronimo*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Cornelia*, and *Soliman and Perseda*. His share in other plays may have been great, and it is now generally agreed that he was the author of the lost *Hamlet*, upon which Shakespeare based the version of his play that we have in the first quarto. In 1593 Kyd, like Marlowe and Raleigh, all three of whom were friends, was charged with holding opinions irreligious and seditious. Report has it that after Marlowe's death Kyd tried to shift the blame to him. Kyd died the following year (1594), at the age of thirty-six.

In his day he enjoyed great popularity on the stage; and Meres in *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, placed him among the foremost tragic dramatists of the time. It has been the custom to say that his importance in the history of English drama is purely historical: that he developed the "blood and thunder" type of tragedy, making possible such masterpieces as *Hamlet* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. No one without a vivid sense of stagecraft, robust imagination, and an insight into character could have done this. Second only to Marlowe among serious dramatists immediately contemporaneous with him, he enjoys the distinction of having influenced Shakespeare profoundly.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE was born in Canterbury in 1564, the son of a shoemaker whose fortunes later, apparently, improved. He was educated at the King's School, Canterbury, and at Corpus Christi (then Bene't) College, Cambridge, where he held a scholarship from 1581 to 1587, receiving the B.A. in 1584 and the M.A. in 1587. When he went to London is not known, but by 1587 he had produced the first part of *Tamburlaine* and given a new and powerful impetus to English drama. There followed in quick succession the second part of *Tamburlaine*, *Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, and *Edward II*, Marlowe's four great plays. *The Massacre at Paris* and *The Tragedy of Dido*, the latter written with Nash, are below his standard. It is possible likewise that he had a hand in the second and third parts of *Henry VI*, and a smaller share in *Titus Andronicus*. His non-dramatic works include translations of Ovid and of Lucan, miscellaneous poems, and the famous *Hero and Leander*, completed by Chapman after Marlowe's death.

Little is known of Marlowe's life in London, aside from his writings. That he was a dissolute, social outcast is not to be believed. His association with Sir Walter Raleigh, Kyd, and other liberal and speculative minds gave him the reputation of being an atheist. In 1593, because of his views, a warrant was issued for his arrest. Marlowe left London for Deptford where, according to tradition, he was killed in a tavern quarrel by one Francis Archer.

Dead at twenty-nine, he had greatly surpassed as a poet and as a playwright all his contemporaries, including Shakespeare, who was his exact age.

BEN JONSON was born to poverty at Westminster in 1573, a few weeks after his father's death. For a while, it is said, he followed his stepfather in his trade as a bricklayer, when he was admitted to Westminster School through the liberality of William Camden, the master. He may have attended St. John's College, Cambridge, but took no degree. About 1592 he married, not too happily; later he served with the army in Flanders; and by 1597 he was established in London as a playwright and actor with the Admiral's Men. In 1598 he was imprisoned for killing another actor in a duel, and during the same year he won an instantaneous success with his *Every Man in his Humour*. *Every Man Out of his Humour*, *Cynthia's Revels*, and *Poetaster* followed, comedies in which he satirized Dekker and Marston in the so-called "war of the theatres." In 1603 his classical tragedy, *Sejanus*, was acted at the Globe by Shakespeare's company, and shortly afterwards, because of this play and his part in *Eastward Ho!*, he, with Chapman and Marston, was again committed to prison. After his release he produced *Volpone*, *Epicœne*, *The Alchemist*, *Catiline*, and *Bartholomew Fair*, among other plays, and in 1616 he published a collected edition of his works in folio. Two years later, he visited Scotland, where he held his well-known talks with Drummond of Hawthornden. Oxford conferred an M.A. upon him. He had been successful in the theatre and at court, and he was recognized as the literary dictator of London, rich in both money and friends. In 1621, he was made master of the revels and wrote many masks for the court, but his fortunes steadily and rapidly declined. In 1623, his library, one of the largest in England, was burned, and in 1628 he was pleased to accept the office of city chronologer. The rest of his life was unsuccessful. He died on August 6, 1737, and was buried in Westminster Abbey — in a vertical position, to save precious space.

Jonson was the scholar among Elizabethan dramatists, a solid, careful artisan, a poet, and a critic who with all his classicism was liberal in his literary views.

THOMAS HEYWOOD was born probably in Lincolnshire and probably about 1575. It is believed that he went to Cambridge and became a fellow of Peterhouse; but this is unlikely since he was writing plays in London when he was only twenty-one. He went on the stage about the same time, becoming a member of the company known as the Lord Admiral's Men. He was the most prolific playwright of the first half of the seventeenth century, with a fecundity rivalling that of Lope de Vega and Alexandre Dumas. A score of years before his death he declared that he had had "an entire hand or at least a main finger in two hundred and twenty plays." He wrote also a heterogeny of other works in prose and in verse. He was inventive and ingenious; he was skillful in constructions, but he was rarely able to create characters of an enduring vitality. He was alive in 1648, probably dying a year or two later.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT *and* JOHN FLETCHER. The collaboration and strong friendship of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher is unique in the history of English dramatic literature. Each seemed to supplement the other in writing, and both came of prominent families, with natural tastes which suited well the new theater-going public of James I, the court, in contrast to the more heterogeneous audience that Shakespeare had addressed.

Beaumont, the younger of the two, was born about 1584, the son of a knight. He attended Pembroke College, Oxford, for a year, leaving in 1598, when his father died. In 1600 he was admitted to the Inner Temple, and within a few years was writing verses and plays. His collaboration with Fletcher extended from about 1604 or 1605 to 1612 or 1613, when Beaumont married and apparently retired from the dramatic authorship. He died in 1616, at thirty-two, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The partnership is summed up thus by G. C. Macaulay: "The general result of criticism seems to be as follows. It is probable that, of the fifty-two plays which have commonly passed under the joint names, at least one [*The Woman Hater*] belongs to Beaumont alone, and that in some eight or nine others he coöperated with Fletcher, [most prominently, *The Knight of the*

Burning Pestle, A King and No King, Cupid's Revenge, Philaster, and *The Maid's Tragedy*] taking, usually, the leading part in the combination; that Fletcher was the sole author of about fifteen plays, and that there are some two-and-twenty, formerly attributed to the pair conjointly, in which we find Fletcher's work combined with that of other authors than Beaumont, besides five or six in which, apparently, neither Fletcher or Beaumont had any appreciable share."

John Fletcher, son of Richard Fletcher, a clergyman in Rye, Sussex (who later became Bishop of London), and cousin to the poets Giles and Phineas Fletcher, was born in 1579. He attended for a time Corpus Christi (then Bene't) College, Cambridge. In London he became associated with Beaumont, living with him, according to tradition, "on the Bankside, not far from the Play-house," until Beaumont's marriage or retirement. Later, he collaborated with Shakespeare, probably in *Henry VIII*, and surely in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and, among others, with Jonson, Rowley, and especially, Massinger. Among his own plays the most prominent are *The Faithful Shepherdess, Wit Without Money, Valentinian, Rule a Wife and Have a Wife,* and *The Wild-Goose Chase.* He died during the plague of 1625.

Fletcher's achievement alone and as a collaborator is high, both in comedy and in tragedy. He has the true playwright's instinct for effective situation, clearness, and speed in narrative. He is, besides, a genuine poet, with a rich lyric note. With Beaumont, Fletcher opened a new era in English drama, during which they enjoyed a greater popularity than Shakespeare, whose latest plays, notably *Cymbeline* and *A Winter's Tale,* are obviously influenced in their structure by the dramatic-romances of the more youthful collaborators.

JOHN WEBSTER. Almost nothing is known of Webster's life. He was born about 1580 and died about 1625. Both dates are guesses. His father was a tailor in London, and the conjecture has been made that the future dramatist himself followed the trade for a time — a fact unimportant if true. By 1602 he was working for Henslowe in collaboration with other dramatists. Within a few years he produced *Westward Ho!* and *Northward Ho!* with Dekker, and *The Malcontent* with Marston. By 1612 he had written his first piece alone, the powerful tragedy, *The White Devil,* and about two years later, his masterpiece, *The Duchess of Malfi. Appius and Virginia,* and *The Devil's Law Case,* less able productions, complete the list of his four plays. In addition, he collaborated with Rowley, with Middleton, and with Heywood.

Webster, like Marlowe, stands close behind Shakespeare as a tragic dramatist. With a sure grasp of stage conditions, with a vivid imagination, deep understanding, and a remarkable gift of phrasing, he produced scenes in his tragedies of blood where the startling theatricalism served only to bring out more dramatically the eternal sorrows of human life.

PHILIP MASSINGER was born in November, 1583. He was entered at St. Alban Hall, Oxford, in May, 1602. When he was twenty-three he left the university without a degree and went to London. He soon began to write for the stage, revealing an unusual gift for playmaking, and modelling himself more or less obviously on Shakespeare. As was the custom then, he collaborated frequently with his fellow poets, Field, Daborne, Tourneur, Dekker, and (most often) Fletcher. He seems to have composed fifteen plays alone and as many more in collaboration. He was an adroit builder of plots — the most skillful (after Shakespeare) in arousing and retaining the interest of playgoers. His blank verse is always adequate to the situation he is handling, but he was a better playwright than poet. He rarely achieved "the mighty line," and his power is less poetical than rhetorical or oratorical. Therefore his plays lend themselves less to quotation than those of his chief rivals. But in the invention and in the articulation of the stories he set upon the stage he is far more ingenious than these rivals. And this is the reason why two or three of his plays survived in the theatre after those of most of his contemporaries had been relegated to the library. He died suddenly in March, 1639–40, in his home on the Bankside, Southwark.

WILLIAM WYCHERLEY was born at Clive, in Shropshire, in 1640. Being the son of a well-to-do royalist, he was sent to France for his education. With the Restoration he returned to England, a polished young gentleman, and took up residence at Queen's College, Oxford, without, however, matriculating or taking a degree. In 1659 he entered the Inner Temple, and two years later his first play, *Love in a Wood,* was acted with great effect. It brought him many friendships at court, especially with the Duchess of Cleveland, the king's mistress, to whom he dedicated the play, and with Charles II himself. Within a few months he produced another comedy of intrigue, *The Gentleman Dancing Master*, followed, in 1672, by *The Country Wife*, a tremendous success. In 1674 his last play, *The Plain Dealer*, was performed. During these years Wycherley lived a free life, in great ease, with many grants from the crown. His health broke down, and King Charles supplied him with money for an extended visit to France. Shortly after his return, about 1680, he married secretly the wealthy Countess of Drogheda. She proved to be a very jealous wife; and knowledge of the marriage lost Wycherley his favor at court. The Countess died soon afterwards, leaving the dramatist a fortune; but litigation and debts brought him to the debtors' prison. The remainder of his life was unsuccessful, but for a man of his philosophy, not necessarily unhappy. In 1704 he began a long and close friendship with the youthful Pope, who was just beginning his career. The scattered pieces in prose and verse that he wrote during this period, the best of which were none too good, owe much to Pope's revisions. A few days before his death in 1716, he married a young girl, simply to defeat his nephew's hopes.

Wycherley was renowned as a gentleman of the town, famous for his wit and judgment. His comedies are at times too bitter to be jovial, but they are never flat, because of his penetration into things as they are. His savage truthfulness, disguised under humor which though sometimes mirthful is more frequently cynical, may be held to outweigh the charge of immorality (and even of indecency) which has been made against him.

JOHN DRYDEN was born in Northamptonshire, August 9 (?), 1631. He was graduated at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1650. It is almost impossible to compress into small compass a statement of Dryden's wide literary activities. He was a shrewd critic, a stylist in prose, and the first poet of his time, besides being a successful dramatist. His first appearance as a playwright was in 1663, with *The Wild Gallant* and *The Rival Ladies.* During the next two years he produced, with Sir Robert Howard, *The Indian Queen* and *The Indian Emperor*, both gorgeously mounted in the new Restoration manner, and both well received. In 1667, with Davenant, he made the first of his adaptations of Shakespeare, an operatic version of *The Tempest.* In 1669–70, *Tyrannic Love* and *The Conquest of Granada*, two heroic tragedies, were acted with great effect by the famous Nell Gwyn. During the next few years, he wrote, among other plays, *Marriage a la Mode*, 1672; an operatic rendering of *Paradise Lost*, 1674; *Aurengzebe*, generally accounted the best of his heroic dramas; *All for Love*, his most representative tragedy, made over from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1678; *Oedipus*, in collaboration with Nathaniel Lee; in 1679 he made an alteration of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida;* he brought out *The Spanish Friar* in 1681; *Don Sebastian*, and *Amphitryon*, probably the best of his comedies, based on Plautus and Molière in 1690. For many of his plays he had the advantage of having the accompanying music written by Purcell, the Marlowe among British composers. No student of the drama should fail to hear "Ye twice ten hundred deities," the conjuror's song from *The Indian Queen*, or better still, "What shall I do to show how much I love her."

Dryden ranks high among Restoration playwrights, but he is not really a great dramatist. He took to the stage because it was popular and remunerative; and without a special aptitude for dramatic writing, made himself a place among the outstanding writers for the English theater of his time. He died in London, May 1, 1700.

THOMAS OTWAY, son of the curate of Trotton in Sussex, was born in 1652. He was educated at Winchester College and at Christ Church, Oxford, which he left without taking a degree. He tried to become an actor in London, but without success. He turned to writing tragedies in heroic verse, and in 1675 his *Alcibiades* was produced with the Bettertons and Mrs. Barry in the cast. The following year, his *Don Carlos* proved a great success, with Betterton as Philip II. During the next two years Otway wrote *Titus and Berenice*, a tragedy adapted from Racine, *The Cheats of Scapin*, based on Molière's comedy, and *Friendship in Fashion*, in prose, a comparative failure. In three years he had made a success as a dramatist, but worn out through dissipation, and downcast by his unreturned love for Mrs. Barry, the actress, he enlisted in the army and went to Holland. Returning the next year, he produced *The Orphan*, his first tragedy in blank verse, an overpowering performance, with Betterton, and Mrs. Bracegirdle, and Mrs. Barry in the famous rôle of Monimia. He followed it with *Caius Marius*, based on *Romeo and Juliet*, and it long supplanted Shakespeare's tragedy. Then he wrote *The Soldier's Fortune*, a successful comedy founded evidently upon his experiences in the army. In 1681–82 appeared his masterpiece, *Venice Preserved.* This marked the culmination of his career, for after this he produced only one more play, *The Atheist;* and he died in 1685, at thirty-three.

"Tender" Otway, as he has been called, was the chief tragic dramatist of the Restoration period. A man of acknowledged ability, successful in every way in the theatre, he was, nevertheless, almost always in want. Torn by emotions which led him into excesses, he passed a life of hardship and struggle, dying in a public house, destitute and friendless.

JOHN VANBRUGH, courtier, soldier, architect, and dramatist, was born in London, of Flemish descent, in 1664. He was educated at Chester, and in 1683 went to France to study architecture. Shortly after his return, in 1686, he received a commission in the army. In 1690 he was again in France, where for some obscure reason he was arrested and imprisoned until 1692, spending the last year in the Bastille. Here he began the composition of a play which later became *The Provoked Wife.* In 1696 he was made a captain in the army. The same year, with the help of Colley Cibber, he produced *The Relapse,* a sequel to the latter's *Love's Last Shift,* Cibber himself acting the part of Lord Foppington. Within the next year he wrote *Aesop,* and *The Provoked Wife,* which Jeremy Collier attacked fiercely in his *Short View of the Immorality of the English Stage,* 1697. A prose version of Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Pilgrim, The False Friend* (made over from Le Sage), *The Confederacy, The Mistake,* and two adaptations from Molière, done in collaboration, all written before 1705, round off his achievement in the drama. From now on he gave himself more to architecture, executing many commissions and gaining for himself a high place among English architects. Among his works was the new Haymarket Theatre, of which, for a while, he was part owner and director, and Blenheim Castle, which he designed and built for the Duke of Marlborough. Among other honors, he received the profitable appointment as Clarenceux king-at-arms in the college of heralds, and in 1714 he was knighted. He died in 1726, leaving a devoted wife and an only son, who, as an ensign in the Coldstream Guards, died of wounds received in the battle of Fontenoy.

Vanbrugh is a far greater writer of comedy than is generally admitted. Although French influence was strong upon him, his mood remained English. He has genuine humor and wit, technical skill, and the ability to observe life closely and shrewdly, without sentimentality. Above all, he is never dull, and seldom commonplace.

WILLIAM CONGREVE was born at Bardsey, near Leeds, in 1670, the descendant of an old family. He was educated at Kilkenny School and Trinity College, Dublin, which he entered in 1685, shortly after Swift, with whom he quickly struck a friendship. Coming to London, he was admitted to the Middle Temple, and soon thereafter published a novel, *Incognita.* He began his career as playwright in 1693, with *The Old Bachelor* and *The Double Dealer. Love for Love* appeared in 1695, *The Mourning Bride* in 1697; and in 1700 Congreve wound up his literary life with *The Way of the World.* At the age of thirty, the idol of London in literature and in society, he retired, writing practically nothing and living largely on sinecures. He was already commissioner for licensing hackney coaches, in 1705 he was made commissioner of wine licenses, and in 1714, secretary for Jamaica. To his death in 1729, he remained the gentleman of wit and pleasure, adored and respected. He was given a public funeral, and buried in Westminster Abbey. He left a substantial fortune, remembering in his will Mrs. Bracegirdle, the actress, and especially, the Duchess of Marlborough, who had an ivory automaton made in his likeness.

Congreve's high place in the history of English literature depends not upon his craftsmanship in the theatre but upon his prose style, unsurpassed, at its best, by any writer.

GEORGE FARQUHAR was born in Londonderry in 1678, the son of a poor clergyman. He was admitted to Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar in 1694, but soon left to become an actor in the town. After little success, he went from Dublin to London, and at the end of a year his first play, *Love and a Bottle,* 1699, was produced at Drury Lane. In 1700 he achieved great success with *The Constant Couple. Sir Harry Wildair,* a popular Restoration comedy, followed in 1701, and *The Inconstant* (based on *The Wild-Goose Chase* of Beaumont and Fletcher) in 1702. About this time Farquhar received a commission in the army; and in 1703 he married. During the last two years of his life he wrote *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux' Stratagem,* the latter on his deathbed. He died in 1707, at twenty-nine, leaving two daughters, whom he asked his friend and biographer, the actor Wilkes, to take care of.

Like his fellow-countryman Goldsmith, Farquhar was happy, careless, buoyant. This spirit of the man radiates through all his comedies. He lacks Congreve's style and Wycherley's solidity; in laughter-making humor, however, in his tolerant and sympathetic portrayal of human foibles, and in his ability in telling a story with abundant theatrical effect he is approached only by Vanbrugh. He was the teacher of Sheridan in plotmaking as Congreve was Sheridan's exemplar in dialogue.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH was born on November 10, 1728, at Pallasmore, Longford, Ireland, where his father held a living. He was graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, when he was twenty. Four years later he set out to see the world and to make his way in it. He rambled to Louvain, where he studied medicine; he pushed on to Switzerland and to Northern Italy; he tarried awhile in Paris, where he met Voltaire; he returned to England and served as undermaster in a school near London; and finally he settled down in London as a hack writer for the booksellers, doing any job of translation or compilation and slowly gaining confidence to venture himself in almost every department of literature. His first book, *The Present State of Polite Learning*, was published in 1759; and he followed this with a *History of England* in 1771, and with a charming book on natural history, *Animated Nature*, in 1774, in which year (on April 4th) he died.

He is credited with the composition of *Goody Two Shoes*, one of the pleasantest of nursery tales. He wrote one of the classics of English fiction, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). He rhymed two contemplative poems, *The Traveller* (1764) and *The Deserted Village* (1770) and the gentlest and most genial of satires, *Retaliation* (1764). His *Citizen of the World* (1760) is a volume of essays which continues the tradition of Steele and served as a model for Washington Irving. And he was the author also of two comedies, *The Good Natured Man* (1768) (which was not successful and which has not kept the stage) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), only a few months before his death (1774) at the early age of forty-six.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN was born in Dublin in the fall of 1751. His father was an actor, elocutionist, and lexicographer. His mother was a beautiful and brilliant woman. Shortly after his parents came to England he was sent to Harrow. At seventeen he came to London and studied with his father for two years. Then the family removed to Bath, then a fashionable watering-place; and there he fell in love with one Elizabeth Linley, a lovely singer, whom he married in 1773 after a romantic courtship. His first play, *The Rivals*, was brought out at Covent Garden on January 17, 1775; and it had to be withdrawn for revision and condensation. When it was acted for the second time ten days later it was immediately and immensely successful. In the spring he produced a one-act farce, *St. Patrick's Day;* and in the fall he produced *The Duenna*, the best ballad-opera since *The Beggar's Opera.* The score was composed by Linley, Sheridan's father-in-law.

In June, 1776, David Garrick retired from the stage and sold his half of Drury Lane Theatre to Sheridan, Linley, and a friend of theirs, Dr. Ford. Sheridan became the manager; and in the course of the next few years he bought out his partners and remained in sole control. He brought out his own masterpiece, *The School for Scandal*, on May 8, 1777; and two years later he followed this with *The Critic*, his last original play, although he touched up a translated German piece, *The Stranger*, in 1798 and adapted *Pizarro* in 1799.

He was only twenty-eight when he gave up playwriting for politics. He was elected to Parliament in 1780, and became one of the most effective of debaters and orators, taking a leading part in the impeachment of Warren Hastings. As a speaker he held his own with Burke, Fox, and the younger Pitt. He neglected the management of Drury Lane, which had to be rebuilt in 1791 and which was destroyed by fire in 1809. Sheridan's last years were miserable; he was overwhelmed with debt and worn by bad health. He lost control of his theater; and in 1812 he could not meet the expense of reëlection to Parliament. In 1813 he was arrested for debt. He died on July 7, 1816, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Byron wrote a monody on Sheridan as Sheridan had written one on Garrick.

EDWARD GEORGE BULWER was born in London on May 25, 1803. He was graduated from Cambridge in 1826. He became a prolific author; and he was early elected to Parliament. In 1838 he was made a baronet, taking his mother's name, Lytton. In 1866 he was raised to the peerage as Lord Lytton of Knebworth. He died at Torquay on January 18, 1873. Of all the Victorian authors he was the most multifarious, aspiring to success in almost every province of the domain of literature. He was essayist, historian, orator, translator, biographer, lyrist, satirist, novelist, and dramatist. He was as versatile as he was clever and as ambitious as he was ingenious. In no field in which he exhibited his various accomplishments did he fail altogether; but it is as a story-teller and as a playwright that he was most successful. He could present interesting characters in interesting situations; and although the characters might be forced or flimsy or even false, the situations were entertaining and effective. In the barren half-century from 1820 to 1870 he was the only man of letters whose plays were successful on the stage; and they were so only because he kept the theater always in mind, adjusting his pieces to the actors and never forgetting the tastes of the contemporary spectators. He composed nine plays in all, and of these three, the *Lady of Lyons* (1838), *Richelieu* (1839), and *Money* (1840), continued to be acted for almost threescore years and ten. The other six were none of them successful; and the abiding popularity of the three which survived the ordeal by fire before the footlights were composed for William Charles Macready, then the manager of Covent Garden. His letters to the actor-manager show that he constantly consulted Macready in the structure of his plots and in the development of his characters.

DIONYSIUS LARDNER BOUCICAULT was born in Dublin in December, 1822. His mother was Irish and his father was a French refugee. He is said to have studied engineering; but before he was twenty, his first play, *London Assurance*, a five-act comedy, was successfully produced in London; and in the next half-century he displayed an incessant activity as a playwright. He followed *London Assurance* with other five-act comedies, *The Irish Heiress* and *Old Heads and Young Hearts;* and he returned to this type of play now and again, notably in the *Jilt* and *Marriage*. He has himself recorded how the inadequate remuneration of the dramatists in England — due to the unfair competition with the contemporary French playwrights, whose pieces could be performed without payment — led him to turn adaptor; and he made innumerable versions of popular French pieces, among them *Louis XI*, *The Corsican Brothers*, and *The Streets of New York*. After he was thirty he went on the stage and appeared in his own adaptation of *The Vampire;* and in time be became an accomplished actor, composing for himself the leading parts in a series of Irish melodramas, *The Colleen Bawn* (dramatized from Gerald Griffin's *The Collegians*), *Arrah-na-Pogue*, and *The Shaughraun*. He was as dextrous as a playwright as he was prolific; but he was content with purely theatrical effect. He was a man of the theater rather than a man of letters; and he wrote solely with an eye to the stage, with no expectation of approval in the study. His original plays are probably nearly as many as his adaptations, but even in them he was prone to use situations and characters which had been invented by earlier dramatists. For the last forty years of his life he spent almost as much time in the United States as he did in Great Britain; and it was in New York that he died in September, 1890.

THOMAS WILLIAM ROBERTSON was born at Newark-on-Trent on January 9, 1829. He was the son of a struggling manager of a circuit of small provincial theaters. He had a desultory education. He was a member of his father's company until that was disbanded, then went up to London where he found it hard to make his living. He wrote prose and verse for all sorts of periodicals, made adaptations of French plays, and wrote plays of his own, without success. In 1864, *David Garrick*, a free rendering of Mélesville's *Sullivan*, supplied an effective part for E. A. Sothern; and in 1865 his original play *Society* was successfully produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. *Society* was an attempt to deal more faithfully with life than the authors of *Money* and *London Assurance* and *Masks and Faces* had done; but it had not a little of the artificiality and arbitrariness of these predecessors. But *Ours*, produced at the same theater in 1866, revealed the helpful influences of the contemporary French comedy of Augier, Sardou, and the younger Dumas. It had only one set to the act: its story was possible and plausible; and its characters were not traditional stage-types but recognizable human beings. *Caste* followed in 1867; and it established Robertson's position as a playwright. For the same company he wrote three other pieces: *Play* (1868), *School* (1869), and *M.P.* (1870). Worn out by his early privations and disappointments he died on February 1, 1871. In the last half-dozen years he had written half-a-dozen plays for other theaters than the Prince of Wales's, but no one of these had achieved popularity.

WILLIAM SCHWENK GILBERT was born in November, 1836, in London. He was graduated from London University in 1856. After four years in the civil service, he studied law and was called to the bar in 1864. He had earlier begun to contribute to *Fun* (a rival to *Punch*), edited by Tom Hood. In this paper he printed the *Bab Ballads*, illustrated by his own humorous sketches and issued as a book in 1869. He began as a playwright by writing a burlesque in 1866, and he composed a dozen other pieces of the same type. In 1870 he wrote *The Palace of Truth*, a three-act comedy in verse, promptly followed by *Pygmalion and Galatea* and *The Wicked World;* and in the succeeding years he wrote half-a-dozen comedies in prose of which the most successful were *Tom Cobb* (1875) and *Engaged* (1877). In 1871 he began his long and triumphant collaboration with Arthur Sullivan, to which we owe fourteen perennially popular comic operas, fantastic in plot, ingenious in character, and sparkling in song. He was knighted in June, 1907; and he was drowned in May, 1911, at Grim's Dyke in an attempt to rescue a young lady who had called for help. Although several of his prose plays, notably *Engaged*, have kept the stage, it is by the opera-books that he is likely to be best remembered; he had a delightful vein of ironic humor and he was extraordinarily skillful and inventive in his metres. Some of his lyrics have the simple sentiment of the Caroline poets. His satire has served as a model for Mr. George Bernard Shaw, who has, however, applied a borrowed method to themes of a more serious purpose. Where Gilbert was a laughing philosopher, Shaw is a witty iconoclast.

OSCAR O'FLAHERTIE FINGAL WILLS WILDE was born in Dublin on October 15, 1850. In 1874 he left Trinity College, Dublin, for Magdalen College, Oxford. He won the Newdigate prize for poetry in 1878. His career at Oxford was brilliant but marked by many affectations. He went to London where he was a chief among the so-called Æsthetes (ridiculed by Du Maurier in *Punch* and by W. S. Gilbert in *Patience*). He contributed to the newspapers and the magazines; he published two volumes of charming fairy tales; he wrote a novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), which attracted attention partly by its cleverness and partly by its suggestiveness. A volume of his poems appeared in 1891; and the next year he came to America to make the way straight for *Patience*. It was only in 1892, when he was past forty, that he came forward as a playwright. His first play to be performed, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, was instantly successful and it has kept the stage. It was followed, within three years by three other plays, adroitly contrived and sparkling in dialogue. *A Woman of No Importance*, *An Ideal Husband*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Another play, *Salome*, written in French, was acted in Paris in 1894. This was the period of his prosperity; and it came to an end suddenly when he was tried for a criminal offense and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. He left prison a ruined man; and after painful misadventures he died in Paris on November 30, 1900, having published two years earlier his powerful *Ballad of Reading Gaol.*

ARTHUR WING PINERO was born on May 24, 1855, in London, the son of a solicitor, descended from a family of Portuguese Jews, long settled in England. Before he was twenty he became an actor; and when he was twenty-one he joined the admirable company which Henry Irving had gathered at the Lyceum. Here he remained five years, when he gave up playacting to devote himself to playwriting. While he was with Irving he brought out at the Lyceum two or three one-act curtain-raisers. He wrote two or three longer pieces for the Kendals, and it was in *The Squire* (1881) that he first revealed his promise as a playwright. Even more successful then these comedy-dramas were the three or four farces which he then composed for the Court Theatre, the earliest of them, *The Magistrate* (1885), being the most laughter-provoking.

From farce he turned to the comedy of sentiment; and the success of *Sweet Lavender* (1888) made him financially independent and gave him the courage for the more ambitious social drama, *The Profligate* (1889), and for its successor, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, which placed him in the front rank of British dramatists. It was followed by *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* (1895), by *The Gay Lord Quex* (1899), by *Iris* (1901), by *Letty* (1903), by *The Thunderbolt* (1908), and by *Mid-Channel* (1909). In this last year he was knighted.

Not to be forgotten is the charming story of theatrical life, *Trelawny of the Wells* (1898); and to be noted also is his acute and penetrating study of *Robert Louis Stevenson as a Dramatist* (1914).

HENRY ARTHUR JONES was born on September 28, 1851. He was the son of a farmer, and had no early educational advantages; but in his youth he read widely and assimilated what he absorbed. He began his career as a playwright in 1878; and at first he modestly attempted only one-act pieces. The experience he acquired in the composition of these little plays stood in good stead when he produced his first ambitious drama, *The Silver King* (1882). It proved to be one of the most attractive plays of the final decades of the nineteenth century, and it deserved its success. Matthew Arnold declared that while it was a melodrama so far as its plot was concerned, it was literature in its dialogue and in its delineation of character.

He followed it with other melodramas and with *Saints and Sinners*, a study of the English middle class in a small town. He had both fecundity and variety; and in time he advanced from melodrama and the reproduction of middle-class life in the provinces to the satiric study of the more sophisticated upper class in the capital. The earliest of these social comedies is *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (1894), and the finest is *The Liars* (1897). It was in the final year of the last century that he produced *Mrs. Dane's Defence*, a vigorously dramatic comedy, the third act of which is a marvel of technical resourcefulness. In most of these studies of fashionable folk his attitude is that of a man not to the manner born but possessing an uncanny insight into the psychology of Society (so-called), whose foibles and foolishness he has analyzed with unfailing humor and without artificiality of wit.

II. NOTES ON THE PLAYS

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC, here presented in the Brome, the best version, is a little masterpiece of religious drama in its pure form. Unlike the *Secunda Pastorum,* with which it ranks in popularity and in artistry, it adheres closely to the Bible story, without introducing native or secular elements. Only this reservation must be made: the dramatist, while keeping to the facts, treats Abraham and Isaac from the viewpoint of his audience, Abraham as a father, Isaac as a son. Not the historical personage but the human nature behind him and his acts is the question. The play turns, accordingly, not so much on Abraham and Isaac as characters from the Old Testament, as on the conflict between a father's love and a son's devotion. God's command, which is accepted as authority, motivates the play, and the angel who halts Abraham's sword is the familiar "god from the machine."

Abraham and Isaac, among its kind, is unrivalled in arousing rational emotion and in creating suspense. This is all more remarkable because of the extreme artistic economy of the piece. Not many playwrights using, practically, only two characters, could build with the same sureness in construction a similar climax to cap the series of preceding dramatic crises.

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY. Earliest of English farces, the *Secunda Pastorum* or *Second Shepherds' Play,* so called because it followed the first play by the shepherds, remains one of the best plays in the whole history of drama. It is one of thirty-two "mysteries" in the Towneley cycle produced by the guilds near Wakefield during the middle of the fourteenth century. The manuscript dates from the middle of the next century.

Few dramatists have succeeded in making their comic scenes grow so naturally out of the characters. In fact, so much of the humor arises from Mak, his wife, or one of the shepherds acting either "in character" or "out of character" that the play is largely pure comedy. Incidents like the tossing of Mak in a blanket are, of course, simple "slapstick," the funnier, however, for the characterization that has gone before.

The *Secunda Pastorum* is also one of the first native examples of the play within a play, a statement that is not as important as the fact that the play within, interpolated in the Biblical material, is a realistic English story done with the same freshness and exuberance, and the same care-free daring that Shakespeare exhibited when he introduced Falstaff and his crew into the history of Henry IV. And in both cases these human scenes were the result of popular demand, met, fortunately, by playwrights of genius.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER. There may be dispute as to the date when this play was composed, but there can be no doubt that it was written to be performed by school-boys, whether at Eton or Westminster matters little. In the sixteenth century (as in the seventeenth) schools often gave plays; and this piece has many of the characteristics still to be discovered in school-plays. The characters are without subtlety; they are painted in the primary colors; they do not demand histrionic skill from the young actors; they abound in singing, skylarking, and horseplay; they have the robust fun of youthful high spirits. A schoolmaster teaching Plautus and Terence, Udall gives to his play the five-act division prescribed by Horace. He recounts a tale of humorous intrigue which he expands into five episodes each sufficient unto itself. He models one of his characters on the Parasite which was a frequent figure in classic comedy, and he gives to his hero some of the characteristics of the Braggart which the Latins had taken over from the Greeks. But while the form may be more or less Latin, the spirit is right English with a humor akin to that which we find in the folk-plays and in the comic episodes of the mystery-plays — The Second Shepherds' scene and the Noah's Ark scene.

Moreover, the play is adjusted to the circumstances of its original performance in the great hall of a college, with a long, shallow platform at one end in front of the door which opens outward. The action is supposed to take place in the open air before the house of the heroine — and the doors of the hall serve as the doors of the house. There is no suggestion of scenery or any necessity for it. There were steps at the opposite ends of the stage; and the characters make their appearance on one side or the other by mounting these steps, excepting those belonging to the heroine's household, and these enter through the portal at the back, which serves as the door of her house. There is a single story; and so Udall achieved the Unity of Action. This action is shown in a single spot; and thereby he attains the Unity of Place. And as the action is swift and closely linked he secures also the Unity of Time. It may be doubted whether this compliance with the rule of the Three Unities as promulgated by the Italian theorists of the Renascence was deliberate. It may have been due entirely to Udall's adjustment of his methods to the necessities of the occasion.

THE SPANISH TRAGEDY. This play, published anonymously for the first time in 1592 (to judge from the entry in the Stationers' Register), had already enjoyed marked popularity on the stage for several years, according to conjectures. Authorship of the tragedy is assigned to Kyd because of a statement made by Thomas Heywood in his *Apology for Actors*, 1612. Additions, clearly indicated in the present text, appeared in the quartos from 1602 on. They were made, as is generally believed, by Jonson, although some claim for their authorship has been advanced on behalf of Webster and of Shakespeare.

The Spanish Tragedy is one of the best, as it is one of the earliest, tragedies-of-blood, derived largely from Seneca. Here are theatrical spectacles of horror, a chorus, a ghost, mad scenes, the deep-dyed villain, and other melodramatic devices, which have never been absent from the English-speaking stage. The technic of *Hamlet, The Duchess of Malfi, Venice Preserved* — and the list might be extended indefinitely — attests the influence that Kyd and his Senecan tragedy has exerted.

Compared with its greater successors, *The Spanish Tragedy* appears in places somewhat crude. It has, however, an imaginative scope, poetry that is not always bombastic, and a vigorously conceived group of characters, characteristics which made the play an Elizabethan favorite and which even now will entertain and stimulate a modern reader.

THE TROUBLESOME REIGN AND LAMENTABLE DEATH OF EDWARD THE SECOND, the best of history plays before Shakespeare, a powerful influence in creating the form of future " histories " and a popular demand for them, was listed in the Stationers' Register on July 6, 1593. It had been produced a year or two before, at the height of Marlowe's genius.

Its chief source is the famous chronicle by Holinshed, storehouse of Elizabethan dramatic material. By a skillful and justifiable neglect of chronology, amalgamation of incidents, and adept motivation, Marlowe reduces the unwieldy facts furnished by the chroniclers into a unified play, the able craftsmanship of which becomes the more amazing the closer one compares it with its sources. Instead of a rambling narrative adapted loosely to the flexible Elizabethan stage, he has put together a play in which the heterogeneous elements are articulated with surprising nicety.

There is no need to mention Marlowe's "mighty line," justly celebrated, or to praise the creative imagination that gave life to Mortimer, Gaveston, and Edward II. For restrained emotion, nothing at the time could match the scene of Edward's death in the water-filled dungeon, with the drum beating incessantly outside, and the king's mind in torture.

Edward II is a worthy forerunner of *Richard II* and *Richard III*. Much of it has that inevitability which only the masterpieces of the drama possess.

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR has been a great success upon the stage from its first performance in 1598, with Shakespeare himself in the cast, until the nineteenth century. As the first comedy-of-humors it has had an influence, which is easily underestimated, upon not only the drama but other literary forms as well. The story, as in many later English comedies, is formless. The play, accordingly, is hard to read, unless one can visualize the action and the characters, and feel the atmosphere that Ben Jonson in this comedy was able to create upon the stage. Those who have seen Granville Barker's production of *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife* can estimate the effect of this sort of play in the theater.

Jonson's method, adapted partly from Plautus and Terence, was to use types, or humors, characters quickly identified by a salient trait — a method often used since, notably by Dickens. Thus we have the braggart soldier (largely a heritage from Latin comedy), ancestor of Pistol and the immortal Falstaff; the country fool or gull; the would-be poet; the whole-hearted justice; and regularly a "dynamic character," in this play, Brainworm, who by his tricks and disguises or simple deviltry, keeps the story moving sufficiently. The result is a frame-work for the broad acting parts in which actors of every age have always delighted.

A WOMAN KILLED WITH KINDNESS, one out of two hundred and twenty plays that Heywood, that "Shakespeare in prose," is said to have had a hand in; it is his most popular piece and his best. Simplicity of conception and directness in narrative, combined with an out-of-door air, are among its many qualities. Written at a time when the cruellest revenge was the accepted payment, in plays, for a wrong received, this tragedy makes a novel departure in having Master Frankford hold back from torture or murder after discovering that his wife has been faithless. She is treated with a certain kind of kindness, and the villain of the story, Wendall, his life spared, leaves for foreign parts. Mistress Frankford dies almost immediately, a pathetic more than a tragic figure.

Setting his play against a country background, Heywood uses only one of the melodramatic revenge play devices — midnight for the discovery of the crime. Instead of the unnatural life, in plays, of lords and ladies in some foreign castle, he sketches the life of a not too wealthy English family, happy at the beginning in its simple enjoyments. For this reason *A Woman Killed with Kindness* has been called a domestic tragedy, foremost of its type in its time.

The subplot, a popular adjunct to plays in Elizabethan days, is useful in this case for contrast and for balance; but it might easily be omitted, and it never would be missed.

PHILASTER. This tragi-comedy (that is, a play that has a serious note, but no deaths) was one of the most popular dramas during the Elizabethan and Restoration periods. It was first acted about 1610, with a success that made Beaumont and Fletcher sure of the hold that they were to have during the next century, when even Shakespeare fell to second place in comparative appeal with audiences.

Like many masterpieces of Elizabethan drama, *Philaster*, with Bellario's improbable disguise, the poorly motivated hero, and other technical defects, might be regarded by modern readers as an inferior type of play. But the romantic appeal, the truly lyric passages that occur naturally in the course of the action, and the unobtrusive philosophy of the piece, justify the praise that this near-tragedy has enjoyed.

Largely because Fletcher used more run-on lines in his verse, and because Beaumont was better at plotting and in tragic scenes, critics have assigned Act IV, Scene I, and the greater part of Act V, to Fletcher. This division, while problematical, agrees in general with the tradition that Beaumont blocked out and began the play, leaving the rest to Fletcher.

Similarities of incident and tone are obvious between *Philaster* and *Cymbeline*. If A. H. Thorndike's theory is correct, and there is much in its favor, Shakespeare, and not Beaumont and Fletcher, was the imitator.

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI. This renowned "revenge play" was first acted privately, in 1616, by the King's Men at Blackfriars, within the city; and later, 1622, it was given publicly, with much approbation, at the Globe, on the Bankside. It held the stage throughout the century, with Betterton a notable Bosola in Restoration days. The plot is based so slightly on Sidney's *Arcadia* and Painter that the story may be said to be original. The remote Italian source had been utilized by Lope de Vega.

The play is typical of Webster, who intensifies the ordinary Senecan tragedy-of-blood by heaping up additional theatrical horrors. Scenes in the dark, murders, corpses, dead hands, sounds off stage, poison — these are a few of the devices. In addition, however, Webster fashions a spell-binding story which is plausible, if we grant (as we must in much of Shakespeare), a few premises in the beginning. The characters, villainous Renaissance Italians, most of them, revel in causing pain, until even Bosola, most Machiavellian of all, is driven to pity the Duchess and her husband. Any playwright without Webster's poetic power might easily have made the play an absurdity. As it is, the tragedy ranks, according to critics like Lamb, Hazlitt, and Swinburne (who were mainly responsible for the revival of interest in Elizabethan drama during the nineteenth century), right next to Shakespeare. It is to be noted, however, that Mr. William Archer, one of the acutest experts in stagecraft, finds the play "hopelessly loose."

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS, acted by the Queen's Men, was probably written in 1625–26, when Massinger was in the plenitude of his power. It seems to have been more or less founded on Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, to which it is immeasurably superior both in the vigor of its characterization and in the construction of its plot. It is called a comedy, but it verges on melodrama; and at times Sir Giles Overreach has an almost tragic intensity. The comic characters have not a little of the farcical exaggeration of the Jonsonian comedy of humors; and at times the fun is labored, not to say manufactured; but none the less have they proved effective in the theater. The chief figure, bold, unscrupulous, akin in type to the so-called "strong man" — *l'homme fort* — of certain French dramatists of the nineteenth century (and not without parallels in actual life here in America in the twentieth century), has always been attractive to ambitious actors, calling out all their power in the final act, and rewarding the effort by their effect upon their audiences. Early in the nineteenth century the part was acted by Cooke, Kean, and Junius Brutus Booth; and later it was undertaken by Macready, Edwin Booth, and E. L. Davenport. It is now (1924) in the repertory of Mr. Walter Hampden, so we may say that it holds the stage to-day three centuries after it was written, which could not be said of any other play of its period — excepting only Shakespeare's.

THE PLAIN DEALER. With this play the reader first encounters the Restoration comic dramatists, writers who in many ways seem uncannily contemporaneous with us of the twentieth century. The charge has been made and re-made that their comedies are immoral and indecent. An observant, clean-minded reader will find, beside the risky scenes, which nearly always are necessary either to the plot or to the theme upon which the play is built, phases of character or incidents in story that are concrete representations often of thoughts too deep for tears. The best of these comedies are really plays with a theme or an idea, artistically hidden behind enough humor and stage business to keep the play from being a dull treatise. For *The Plain Dealer* we need only recall Hazlitt's well-known remark that "no one can read this play attentively without being the better for it as long as he lives."

Wycherley based his comedy upon *Le Misanthrope* of Molière, but the temper is his own. "Honest" Manly is cruel and cynical as Alceste never is. Fidelia, disguised conventionally (a faint echo of Viola in *Twelfth Night*), is all her name implies compared with the faithless and loose Olivia, who is mainly the cause of Manly's hatred for mankind. More natural, more human, and better comedy are the law-crazy Widow Blackacre, and her son Jerry, in whom one easily recognizes the future Tony Lumpkin; and the beginning of Act II (borrowed from Molière) reminds one immediately of the scandal-mongering in *The School for Scandal.*

The plotting shows strength, without grace; not a few of the devices used for situations are arbitrary; but for all that, the play has a vigorous heartiness which justifies its fame.

ALL FOR LOVE. Although Dryden achieved success with heroic tragedies, and although he defended in his famous essay the use of heroic couplets for plays, his best tragedy, *All for Love*, is written in blank verse. Based on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, it surpasses its source in speed of action, unified construction, compression, and simplicity; but it lacks the poetry, the breadth, and the subtle analysis of character which make the Elizabethan play wide-sweeping drama.

All for Love is "heroic," in a technical sense, in its setting, in its approximate employment of the unities of time and place, in its treatment of the love and ambition of titanic characters, and in the manner in which it was produced — in a large theater, with actresses (unlike the Elizabethan custom), with incidental music, with moveable, elaborate scenery, and whatever else would aid the spectacle.

In Dryden the grandeur achieved by Shakespeare through poetic fire gives way to declamation and rhetoric, and the delineation of character through action or speech to mere exposition. Antony's struggle is more a tug-of-war for his possession on the part of Octavia, his children, and Ventidius, on one side, and Cleopatra, on the other, than a conflict within his soul. First one side wins, then the other, with Antony a bewildered spectator. Yet in his own day and in the next century Dryden's play surpassed Shakespeare's in popularity.

VENICE PRESERVED was first performed at the theater in Dorset Gardens, February, 1682, with Mrs. Barry as Belvidera and Betterton as Jaffeir. It was an instantaneous success, and it kept its place in the theater a century and a half. Using the material furnished by the Abbé de St. Réal in his *Conjuration des Espagnols contre la Venise en 1618*, of which an English translation appeared in 1675, Otway put together a most effective story. Students who believe in the "conflict theory" of drama will learn much by analyzing the triangle (not that of the modern stage), formed by Belvidera, Jaffeir, and Pierre, and by discovering how from simple material Otway has constructed a tense, emotional plot. Especially to be noted is his mastery of suspense.

The play has been called by some the greatest tragedy since Shakespeare; by William Archer a "clumsy, blundering, coarsely bombastic work." Some find in its variations upon the theme of love and duty a curiously modern note. The German poet, Hugo von Hoffmannstahl, whose literary leanings are not particularly towards the bombastic, has translated the tragedy into German verse.

No serious play of the period combines so well as *Venice Preserved* the best features of Elizabethan technic with the Restoration innovations in playmaking.

THE PROVOKED WIFE. Vanbrugh wrote the first sketch of this play during his imprisonment in the Bastille. It was produced in May, 1697, at the theater in Lincoln's Inn Fields with the three greatest actors of the day in the cast. Betterton himself acted Sir John, Mrs. Barry Lady Brute, and Mrs. Bracegirdle Belinda. It remained a favorite throughout the eighteenth century, especially with Garrick, who enjoyed acting the part of Sir John.

The play is one of the liveliest among Restoration comedies. Vanbrugh could tell a story dramatically, maintaining interest through suspense, without insulting the intelligence of his audience. In fact, this sophisticated attitude of his is more pronounced than critics give him credit for, largely because, like Farquhar, he displays a gusto and vivacity which tends to hide his subtlety of intellect. His characterization is fully adequate to the story. To the careful observer there is a depth of thought on the part of some of his personages, which is almost lost under their jollity and apparent irresponsibility. Where Vanbrugh's technic seems faulty to a modern audience, allowance should be made for theatrical traditions like the aside, disguises, and so on, which in his day and long after seemed as natural as certain conventions do to us to-day.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD. Critics from Hazlitt to Cabell, including even Macaulay, whose regard for Restoration comedy was notably low, have all joined in granting this play the highest honors. Millamant is a creation of genius entrancing from the first moment that she makes her famous entrance upon the scene. In features and intellect she has beauty and charm, a combination as rare as it is stimulating; and her conversation, the mirror of her cultured personality, remains the despair of those who would imitate it either in books or in life.

In spite of its excellence the play was a failure on the stage in the beginning. Plays of this type demand a refined audience, seated, preferably, in comfortable seats of a small, or at least, intimate theater. Moreover, *The Way of the World* has an intricate story, almost impossible to follow as Congreve handles his exposition — a blemish theatrically, which we willingly overlook, in admiration over Congreve's fine touch and delicate irony in the presentation of his people, and in delight at the perfect harmony and cadence of his remarkable prose.

THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM. This play, a jolly, bustling comedy, offering to actors wide opportunities for their talents, enjoyed a long life on the stage. Farquhar arranges his story with skill, makes it proceed from the characters without too much "suspension of disbelief" on the part of his hearers, and throws over it a glamour which made tavern scenes and life in country towns popular in the theater for generations to come. The people in the play are typical, yet we remember distinctly Archer and Aimwell, the honest rogues, Boniface, symbol of hospitable, if unscrupulous, innkeeper, his daughter Cherry, Squire and Mrs. Sullen, whose marital difficulties are not unlike Sir John and Lady Brute's, Dorinda, and the servants.

Whatever license there is in the tale has been viewed leniently by most critics because they felt that after all, behind his good-natured fun, Farquhar was taking a serious view of the problem of divorce. In *The Provoked Wife* the quarreling couple change their attitude in the end, and so are able to live on together in better understanding. For Squire and Mrs. Sullen no such happy reform is possible, and they agree to separate upon mutual consent, a decision radical and to some people shocking. Yet it is a conclusion reached by Milton in his tracts on marriage and divorce, upon which, as has been recently shown, Farquhar based some of the ethical ideas in this play. The line between Puritan morality and Restoration immorality was tending to become indistinct.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER was first acted at Covent Garden Theater on March 15, 1773. It was instantly successful and it has retained its popularity in the playhouse for a century and a half. It has a more engaging story than *The Good-Natured Man* and a more abundant theatrical effectiveness. It had a wholesome influence on English drama in that it was antagonistic to the so-called "sentimental comedy" which had a dangerous vogue and which was lachrymatory rather than laughter-provoking, eschewing the robuster realities of life in an unfortunate effort to be "genteel." Goldsmith had shown his own delicate feeling in his poems, but he hated false sentiment and he worked on the theory that often comedy ought to be comic; and he supplied easily and freely the humor which is good humor.

It is difficult to draw an exact line of demarcation between farce and comedy; but it is not difficult to see that *She Stoops to Conquer* is like *The Rivals* of Goldsmith's fellow Irishman in that it relaxes not infrequently into the robuster comicality of farce and that its plot is indisputably arbitrary, the characters being pushed into mirth-provoking situations rather by artifices of the author himself, than by their own volition. The story is ingenious; the action is brisk; the characters are grateful to the actors; the dialogue is apt, terse, to the point, and not bespangled with witticisms taken from a note-book; and as a result we have a play which is gay, graceful, delightful, and completely characteristic of its agreeable author.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL is Sheridan's best play. All things considered it is probably the best play written in our language during the eighteenth century. It is the foremost example in English of the High Comedy, the pattern for which was set by Molière in *Tartuffe* and the *Femmes Savantes*. It sustains the lofty level of true comedy without ever stiffening into drama or relaxing into farce. It has an entertaining story; it has novel situations; it is adroitly constructed: and it is theatrically effective. In its adjustment to the stage it is superior to either of Congreve's chief comedies and it is not inferior in wit. Moreover, it brings before us a group of characters having a more veracious and a more engaging humanity than those we coldly admire in *The Way of the World* or *Love for Love*. Like Molière's masterpieces it was composed for a special group of performers — the incomparable company of comedians which David Garrick had gathered in Drury Lane Theater. Apparently every part was fitted to the actor or actress who first performed it. Mrs. Abington the Lady Teazle had been the impersonator of the coquettes of these Restoration comedies which still survived on the stage, and King was famous for his rendering of testy old bachelors. Smith was the ideal performer of light-hearted young fellows about town; and Palmer had himself the wily palavering manner of Joseph Surface. As the manager Sheridan knew intimately the aptitudes of those for whom he was writing, what he gave them to do in this play was exactly what each one of them could do best. He even omitted a love-scene for the couple married off at the end because the actor who played Charles and the actress who played Maria were not apt at lovemaking.

RICHELIEU was produced by Macready at Covent Garden Theater on March 7, 1839. The letters which the author wrote to the actor-manager have been printed; and they make it plain that the author sought the expert advice of the actor and constantly profited by it — to such an extent indeed that we might almost call Macready a collaborator. It has been suggested that the play owed its inception to the *Cinq Mars* of Alfred de Vigny; and the letters reveal that in the author's first sketch of the plot, Cinq Mars was to be the central figure of the piece. Apparently it was owing to the advice of Macready— whose letters have seemingly not been preserved — that the story was recast and the part of Richelieu amplified for the great tragedian's acting. It was one of Macready's most successful impersonations and it exactly suited his rather rigid method. It was undertaken in America by Edwin Forrest; and it became one of the most relished parts in Edwin Booth's repertory. It was revived by Henry

Irving in London in 1873, and it is still occasionally seen on the stage of the twentieth century, although only infrequently. It is an illuminating example of the kind of play which was conditioned by the huge theaters of the early nineteenth century, with their projecting aprons — of the play in which the characters are little more than parts for the actors and in which the story lends itself to spectacular effects and to loud-sounding rhetoric.

ONDON ASSURANCE was produced on March 4, 1841 (before its author had come of age), at the Covent Garden Theater, then under the management of Mme. Vestris. She mounted it sumptuously, with handsome furniture and new scenery; it is believed that the box-set, the room with walls and a ceiling (instead of a back-drop and side wings), was then first shown on the English stage. She acted in it herself by the side of Charles J. Mathews, William Farren, and Mrs. Nesbit, a cast of exceptional brilliancy. There is little originality in the story, the situations, or the characters, all of them old friends to the old playgoer; but the mixture was adroitly compounded with the instinct of a born playwright. If we seek veracity on the stage, we cannot but be disappointed in the action and the actors of a play which presents an impossible view of humanity. But in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century and for forty years thereafter the theater was a realm of unreality not striving to represent life as it is but content to continue the outworn tradition of the artificial comedy of the last century, with the bravura passages (like Lady Gay Spanker's speech on fox-hunting) which were the delight of the performers. Yet it kept the stage for fifty years; and it departed only when the taste of the public had changed and when the picture frame stage had succeeded the apron-stage — a change which forced us to see the unreality of plays like this.

CASTE was the third of the series of six plays which Robertson wrote specially for the company at the Prince of Wales Theater in the final six years of his life. It was produced on April 6, 1867; and it had been preceded by a story with a similar plot, *The Poor-Rate Unfolds a Tale,* contributed to a Christmas annual in 1866. The divergencies between this story and the play suggest that the play had already taken shape in his mind and that he deliberately modified its incidents to suit the narrative form. The story is a poor thing. The play is not only Robertson's masterpiece but also a turning point in the development of English comedy. It marked the end of the Restoration tradition of arbitrary plot peopled by artificial characters. Its form was borrowed from Scribe, but with a simplification of his intricate mechanism; and its spirit was English, with an obvious indebtedness to Thackeray. It was the work of a writer who knew the theater intimately, who was revolting against the staginess of his predecessors and who was honestly striving to present life as he saw it. After nearly sixty years, after the English stage has been enriched by the superior skill and by the richer endowments of Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Pinero, of Barrie and of Shaw, we cannot help seeing that the old Marquise is a character so highly colored as to be almost a caricature; but in its own day "Caste" was an epoch-making play. As such it deserves to be held in affectionate remembrance. It was a new departure in the English drama; and it aided powerfully in the emancipation of the English dramatist from the outworn fashions of the preceding century.

PYGMALION AND GALATEA. This play was produced at the Haymarket Theater in 1871. It was written to order to fit the members of the long-established Haymarket company then under the management of J. B. Buckstone. The broad low comedy part was devised to suit the peculiarities of Buckstone himself, while the hero and heroine were adjusted to the talents of Mr. and Mrs. Kendal (Miss Madge Robertson). It is a better piece of work than its immediate predecessor, *The Palace of Truth,* and its immediate successor, *The Wicked World,* also written to order for the Haymarket company. It is, in its way, a clever piece of work, with many touches of its author's ironic humor; but it is artificial in plot and inadequate in its character delineation. Moreover, Gilbert, who was a master of rhyme, did not disclose an equal mastery in his handling of blank verse. His lines seem not a little labored: and they are sometimes thin and almost empty. At the Haymarket the play was fairly successful; it was better than any of the other blank verse plays of the period; and the part of Galatea provided opportunities for an actress, as was seen when the play was revived at the Lyceum in 1883 by Miss Mary Anderson, then in the springtime of her beauty and in the summer of her art. With her as the center of attraction the play had a long run in London, and it repeated its triumph when the actress returned to her native land. But when she relinquished the part, the piece was not strong enough to stand alone; and it has not been seen on the stage since.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN was first played at the St. James Theater in London on February 22, 1892. It achieved an immediate success; and it has been frequently revived in Great Britain and the United States. It is the most brilliant comedy written in English in the nineteenth century; but it does not owe its popularity solely, or indeed chiefly, to the sparkle of its dialogue, with its conscious cynicisms and its carefully elaborated "epigrams." It has the solider merit of a dextrously articulated plot, with situations of progressive interest; and in this respect it is patterned upon the contemporary comedies of the younger Dumas and Victorien Sardou. Its characters have a sufficient plausibility but they lack ultimate veracity, being only the creatures of the story the author has chosen to tell. The unexpected and effective appearance of Mrs. Erlynne at the end of the third act had been anticipated by the heroine of Bronson Howard's *One of Our Girls*, produced in New York half-a-dozen years earlier; and the trick of allowing Lady Agatha to say nothing but "Yes, mamma," is obviously taken from Gondinet's monologue, *Oh, Monsieur.* But these borrowings detract but little from the originality of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, which is the most characteristic of all Oscar Wilde's writings whether in prose or in verse.

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY was produced at the St. James Theater on May 27, 1893. It was the first of Pinero's social dramas and it has remained the most popular, although it is not so solid a piece of work as the later *Thunderbolt* and *Mid-Channel*, which were composed in his riper maturity. Its popularity has not been confined to the English-speaking world; it has been translated, published, and performed in most of the modern languages. In fact, it is the only British play which has achieved the cosmopolitan vogue of the *Dame aux Camélias, The Doll's House*, and *Magda*. Its heroine has been as tempting to actresses of all nationalities as were the heroines of Dumas, Ibsen, and Sudermann.

But *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* is more than a star-part. It is a serious study of a social question; it makes us think while it is making us feel. Its characters are not merely parts for players — although they are that, first of all — they are accusable human beings whom we can understand and sympathize with. Aubrey Tanqueray and Cayley Drummle, Ellean and Lady Orreyed are as authentic as Paula herself.

The workmanship is adroit but not so impeccable as that of *The Thunderbolt* and of *Mid-Channel.* The exposition, excellent as it is, seems rather arbitrary; and the arrival of Hugh Ardale (which brings about the fatal catastrophe), may be called almost accidental. Certainly it is not inevitable; it is brought about by "the long arm of coincidence" and not by the "finger of fate." But as Voltaire said, the adverse criticism of the details of a masterpiece does not prevent its remaining a masterpiece.

THE LIARS was first acted at the Criterion Theater in London on October 6, 1897, and it ran for more than a year. It had an almost equal success in the United States. On both sides of the Atlantic it has been revived again and again; and after more than a quarter of a century it is as fresh and as effective as it was when it was first seen on the stage. If the English-speaking peoples had a permanent stock-company, *The Liars* would be kept in the repertory as the *Gendre de M. Poirier* and the *Monde où l'on s'ennuie* are kept in the repertory of the Comédie-Française.

The Liars is like these two modern masterpieces of the French stage in that it is a true comedy in accord with the pattern set by Molière in the *Femmes Savantes* and by Sheridan in the *School for Scandal.* Like them it presents a picture of "Society," of the fashionable world. Like them it has an ingenious plot, veracious characters, and sparkling dialogue. Like them it is maintained always on the level of high comedy, never relaxing into farce and never stiffening into melodrama.

Technically, when considered simply as a piece of playmaking, it is superbly skillful. Its exposition is admirable. Its first act takes us into the center of its story; it introduces all the persons who are to take part; and it makes us intimately acquainted with their peculiarities, so that we can foresee how they will each of them act. Its second act involves the delightfully feminine heroine in a difficult complication. Its third act, with its succession of arrivals through the same door, is managed with indisputable mastery.

III. A READING LIST IN THE CHIEF BRITISH DRAMATISTS

No attempt has been made to provide an exhaustive bibliography. Books are cited for their availability and general usefulness.

THE ART OF THE DRAMA

Recent discussions of the principles of the dramatist's art are Brander Matthews, *A Study of the Drama* (1910), *The Principles of Playmaking* (1919), and *Playwrights on Playmaking* (1923); William Archer, *Playmaking, a Manual of Craftsmanship* (1913), and *The Old Drama and the New* (1923); Clayton Hamilton, *The Theory of the Theater* (1910), and *Studies in Stagecraft* (1913); and George Pierce Baker, *The Technique of the Drama* (1919). See also three Publications of the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University: Bronson Howard, *The Autobiography of a Play* (1914); Brunetière, *The Law of the Drama* (1914); and Arthur W. Pinero, *Robert Louis Stevenson as a Dramatist*, with an introduction by Clayton Hamilton (1914). There is an unsatisfactory translation of Freytag, *The Technic of the Drama*, but the theories set forth by the German author are now discredited.

THE BRITISH DRAMA

There is no satisfactory account of the development of the drama in the English language. A. W. Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature* (2 vols., 1873; 3 vols., 1899) comes down only to the reign of Queen Anne; and it is less a history of dramatic development than it is a chronological collection of biographies of dramatic poets with a critical consideration which is literary rather than dramatic. For a treatment which is primarily dramatic, dealing with plays as plays, Archer's *The Old Drama and the New* (1923) is excellent. The biographical articles in the successive volumes of *The Cambridge History of English Literature* contain the results of recent research. Also to be consulted are the introductions to the several plays contained in C. M. Gayley, *Representative English Comedies* (3 vols., 1903, 1913, 1914); Ashley H. Thorndike's exhaustive story of English Tragedy is to be companioned by a study of the types of English Comedy.

For the lives of dramatists, see also *The Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee.

THE MEDIÆVAL STAGE

Among standard works in this field the student will find most useful E. K. Chambers, *The Mediæval Stage* (2 vols., 1903); A. W. Pollard, *English Miracle Plays, Moralities, and Interludes* (1890); E. H. Moore, *English Miracle Plays and Moralities* (1907); W. R. Mackenzie, *The English Moralities* (1914); and the introduction to C. G. Child's *Everyman and Other Plays* in the Riverside Literature Series. For authoritative texts of the early plays, see J. M. Manly, *Pre-Shakesperean Drama* (2 vols., 1897).

The most adequate study of Udall's career can be found in C. G. Child's edition of *Ralph Roister Doister* (1912) in the Riverside Literature Series.

THE TUDOR STAGE

Ashley H. Thorndike, *Shakspere's Theater* (1916) contains full information about the organization of the Elizabethan playhouse; and also useful is J. Q. Adams, *Shaksperian Playhouses* (1917). F. E. Schelling, *The English Chronicle Play* (1902), and Frank Ristine, *English Tragicomedy* (1910), deal with two species, but there is not as yet a corresponding study of the Tragedy-of-Blood or Revenge-Play. C. F. Tucker Brooke, *The Tudor Drama* (1911), and F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama* (2 vols., 1908), may be consulted to advantage. E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (4 vols., 1923), is the most recent work on the subject.

Among works on special authors see F. S. Boas, *The Works of Thomas Kyd* (1901); A. H. Bullen, *The Works of Christopher Marlowe* (3 vols., 1885); R. W. Bond, *The Works of John Lyly;* J. W. Cunliffe, *The Works of George Gascoigne*, as well as the introductions to the various volumes in the Mermaid Series, and the Belles Lettres Series.

THE RESTORATION STAGE

There is no book on the organization of the theater under the Stuarts to be placed by the side of Thorndike's *Shakspere's Theater.* But much can be learned about the methods of staging and the necessary effects of the development of the apron-stage from the earlier platform-stage in G. C. D. Odell's *Shakspere from Betterton to Irving* (2 vols., 1920). The most compact history of the period is G. H. Nettleton, *English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century 1642–1780* (1914); the most recent is A. Nicoll, *A History of Restoration Drama, 1660–1700* (1923). The student should consult also J. Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830* (10 vols., 1832); the stimulating introductions by Leigh Hunt in *Dramatic Works of Wycherley, Congreve, Farquhar, and Vanbrugh* (1840), and Macaulay's review, republished in his Collected Works; Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Comic Writers;* Lamb, *On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century;* the essays by Thackeray on the period; Meredith's *An Essay on Comedy;* and *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber, written by himself.*

For Otway, the reader may consult R. Noel's introduction to the Mermaid edition, and E. Gosse's enthusiastic account in *Seventeenth Century Studies* (1883).

The facts in Wycherley's life are given by Macaulay, from a somewhat twisted viewpoint, in the essay used as an introduction in the Mermaid edition. The most extensive study is C. Perromat, *William Wycherley, sa vie, son œvre* (1921). For Vanbrugh, see W. C. Ward, *Sir John Vanbrugh* (2 vols., 1893); A. E. H. Swaen's additional material in the Introduction to the Mermaid edition; and G. H. Lovegrove, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Sir John Vanbrugh* (1902). For Farquhar, see William Archer's admirable Introduction to the Mermaid edition; for Congreve, the Introduction to Archer's edition, and E. Gosse, *William Congreve* (1888).

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

For an account of the drama in this century see Nettleton; E. Bernbaum, *The Drama of Sensibility* (1915); and, as always, *The Cambridge History of English Literature.* For the life of Sheridan, Walter Sichel's account is most recent; and for Cumberland, see his autobiography and the study by S. T. Williams. There are several biographies of Goldsmith and of Garrick, but no careful studies of Kelly, Murphy, Burgoyne, and the Colmans.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

There is no adequate history of the drama covering this century. For the early years the *Cambridge History* is useful. For the Victorian period, among the many books on the stage, actors, and playwrights, the reader will find information in William Archer, *English Dramatists of To-day* (1882); A. Filon, *The English Stage* (1897); C. Scott, *The Drama of Yesterday and To-day* (2 vols., 1899); S. Dark and R. Grey, *W. S. Gilbert, his Life and Letters* (London, 1923); *A Stage Play*, by W. S. Gilbert, with an Introduction by William Archer, in the Publications of the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University; *Letters of Bulwer-Lytton to Macready*, with an Introduction by Brander Matthews, privately printed, the Carteret Book Club (1911); P. P. Howe, *Dramatic Portraits* (1913); Henry Arthur Jones, *The Foundations of a National Drama* (1913); B. H. Clark, *The British and American Drama of To-day* (1915); Watson Nicholson, *The Struggle for a Free Stage in London* (1906).

See also Clayton Hamilton's Library Edition of Pinero (4 vols., 1917–22), and his similar edition of Jones (1924); also the collected dramatic reviews of A. B. Walkley, William Archer, and G. B. Shaw.

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